



THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF CENTRAL SAANICH
Special (Open) Council Meeting
AGENDA

Monday, April 22, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers

All Council meetings are being conducted in a hybrid in-person and virtual format.

(Please note that all proceedings of Open Council Meetings are live streamed and video recorded on the District's website.)

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ people which includes W̱JOLEŁP (Tsartlip) and S̱XÁUTW̱ (Tsawout) First Nations.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3.1 Agenda of the April 22, 2024 Special (Open) Council Meeting

Recommendation:

That the agenda of the April 22, 2024 Special (Open) Council meeting be approved as circulated.

4. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

4.1 Motion to Convene Committee of the Whole Meeting

Recommendation:

That the Special (Open) Council meeting be recessed and a Committee of the Whole meeting be convened.

4.2 Workshop: Parks & Trails Master Plan Phase 1 Summary

3

Workshop on the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

Attachment:

- Report from the April 4, 2024 Parks and Environment Standing Committee, with updated Appendix A.
- Staff Presentation

For information.

4.3 Adjournment

Recommendation:

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned and the Special (Open) Council meeting be reconvened.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6. NEW BUSINESS (Including Motions and Resolutions)

7. ADJOURNMENT



The Corporation of the District of Central Saanich

PARKS AND ENVIRONMENT STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

For the Parks and Environment Standing Committee meeting on Thursday, April 4, 2024

Re: Parks & Trails Master Plan Phase 1 Summary

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Parks and Environment Standing Committee receive this report for information and provide any additional input to be considered when preparing a draft Parks and Trails Master Plan during the next phase of the project.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Parks and Trails Master Plan project, and specifically provide a summary of public input received and the background materials that have guided the project.

BACKGROUND:

The District is working on a new Parks and Trails Master Plan to update our vision and priorities for these valuable public spaces. The first phase of the plan involved listening to residents, businesses, partners, and visitors of the District, as well as assessing the current condition and use of our facilities and identify their natural and physical features.

The result will be a new Parks and Trails Master Plan to help guide our decisions and actions for the next 10 to 20 years. The plan will build on the work we have already done through the Official Community Plan review, the Active Transportation Plan, the Saanichton Village Design Plan, the Age-Friendly Community Plan, the Accessibility Plan, and others. The new Parks and Trails Master Plan will help us make our parks and trails more attractive, accessible, functional, and sustainable for everyone to enjoy.

DISCUSSION:

What We Heard

More than 600 people participated in Phase 1 (September 2023 to March 2024) through a survey, pop-up events, workshops, an open house, and school visits; this input identified the community priorities for the plan. The priorities were consistent across parks, trails, and beaches, highlighting the need to ensure all areas are accessible and safe for all users by improving connectivity, signage and infrastructure while maintaining a natural feel of the rural Central Saanich area. District staff were also provided opportunities to provide input, and comments received from staff closely reflect those from the community. Particularly our Parks Crew have appreciated the opportunity and have provided valuable input including operations and maintenance considerations. The project's What We Heard Report is attached as Appendix A.

The seven priorities identified from our community and partner engagement are:

Accessibility for all users to access beaches, trails, and parks in all weather.

- Improve trail width, surfaces, and signage ratings for accessibility.
- Ensure beach / water access including mats and boat launches are cleared and maintained.
- Ensure paved areas for wheelchair and stroller access.
- Expand accessible washrooms, parking, and use of curb cut outs.

Connectivity between communities, neighbourhoods, and link to other networks.

- Provide better bike trails connecting Central Saanich such as Lochside.
- Connect trails in residential areas to and from rural areas and to schools.
- Ensure continuous connectivity of trail systems.

Dog Friendly Initiatives including responsible dog ownership.

- Provide off-leash dog areas to enjoy nature and trails with dogs.
- Ways for dogs to remain under control for the safety of people and sensitive natural areas, whether it be on-leash requirements, animal-free areas, or enforcement.

Environment Protection of the natural areas, wildlife, and natural ecosystems.

- Keep the parks as natural as possible and maintain green spaces.
- Remove invasive species and plant of native species.
- Maintain and expand forest canopy.

Infrastructure improvements including maintenance and expanding facilities.

- Expand availability of washrooms, parking, and boat launches.
- Update playgrounds with more natural feature (trees, boulders) and places to climb; also add zipline features.
- Add desired youth amenities including pump tracks/bike parks and pool/splash parks.
- Ensure funding is available for maintenance and improvements.
- Expand designated trails and access to parks for horses including designated spaces for parking.

Safety for all users including signage, interaction, connectivity, and lighting.

- Address multi-user trail safety (dogs, pedestrians, bikes, horses) such as dog incidents, and e-bike usage.
- Provide safe connections for walkers and cyclists using bike lanes, trails, and sidewalks.
- Improve lighting at parks, commuter trails, and crosswalks for evening/winter use.

Trail marking & signage to identify activities, wayfinding signage, and education.

- Provide educational signage about flora, fauna, and Indigenous significance including SENĆOŦEN names.
- Add education and wayfinding through signage, maps, GIS, and information on trails.
- Take a regional partnership approach to maps, guides, icons on trails.

Background Report

A background report is attached as Appendix B that summaries key findings from a range of materials reviewed, community demographics, and currents trends affecting parks and trails management. The background information review helps to inform development of a draft plan and provides guidance for developing policies and priorities. The background review helps the project team identify where further analysis needed and identify where competing interests may create tension and require further research to explore possible solutions.

NEXT STEPS:

The project team is seeking further input and considerations for the Parks and Trails Master Plan from members of the Parks and Environment Standing, and subsequently Council, before preparing a draft plan. We have also been engaging with WJOLELP (Tsartlip) and S7ÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nations. We have been invited to attend an upcoming WJOLELP (Tsartlip) Band Council meeting and are coordinating with S7ÁUTW (Tsawout) about a similar meeting. Continued analysis of various aspects of our parks system, such as environmental conditions, spatial distribution, and trail conditions is ongoing and will help determine the recommended parks and trails classifications, park supply targets, and operational impacts among others.

CONCLUSION:

The project team truly appreciates the level of interest and public input into the project to date and look forward to re-engaging with all the community partners once a draft plan is prepared.

Report written by:	Andrea Pickard, Community Planner
Report reviewed by:	Britt Burnham, Manager of Community Engagement
Respectfully submitted by:	Jarret Matanowitsch, Director of Planning and Building Services
Concurrence by:	Christine Culham, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

- Appendix A: What We Heard Report
- Appendix B: Background Review Report

Parks and Trails Master Plan

What We Heard

April 15, 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the District of Central Saanich residents, WSÁNEĆ community members, school staff and students, local groups, community organizations and staff for taking the time to share your experiences and wisdom throughout the first phase of the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

Special thanks to the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee, Peninsula Recreation Commission, Peninsula Streams, PEPÁKEN HÁUTW, Habitat Acquisition Trust, Girl Guides, CO-PAC, CRD DOGG Society, Central Saanich Equestrian and Horse Community, Elk Beaver Lake Equestrian Society, local sports organizations, community partners and others who participated in workshops.

Central Saanich and its parks, trail and beaches are located on the traditional territories of the WSÁNEĆ peoples. The District of Central Saanich is committed to celebrating and respecting the knowledge and practices of the Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nations, and working with the WSÁNEĆ peoples to protect our environment and ensure their perspectives, wisdom and wishes are reflected in the District's management of local parks, trails and beaches.



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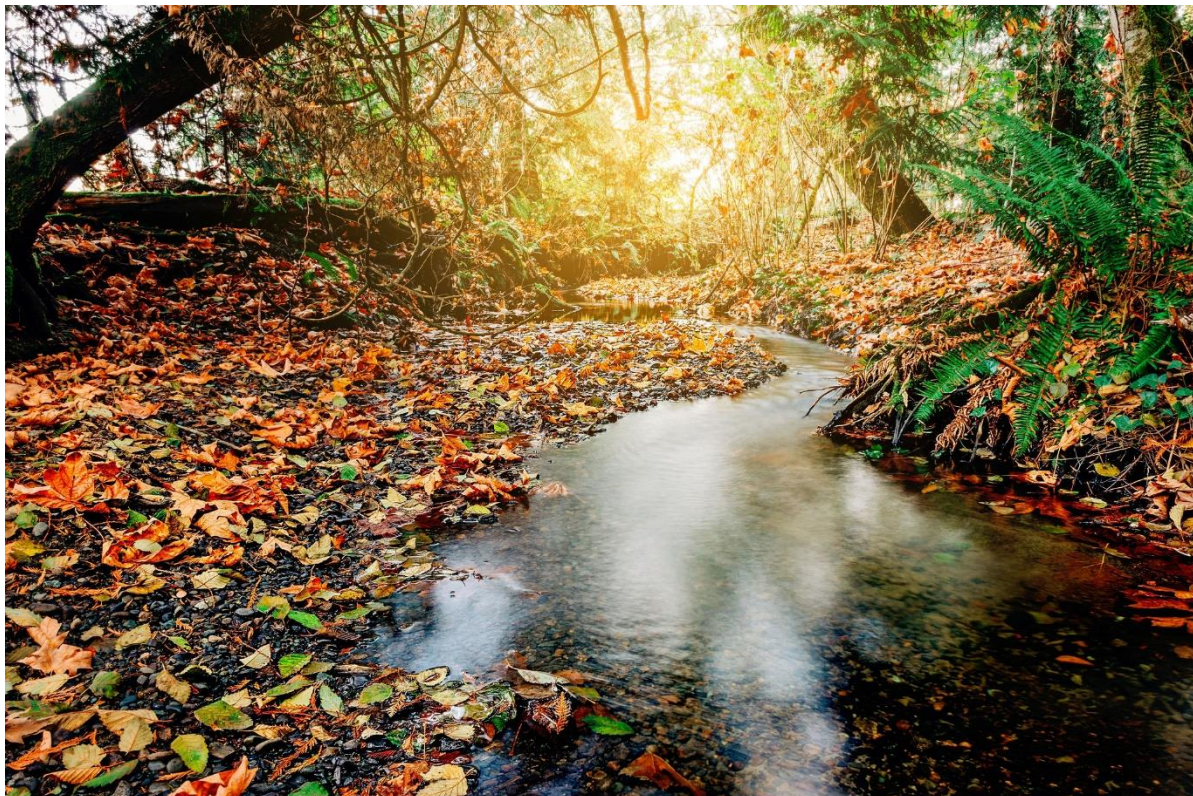
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Parks and Master Plan Overview

We love our parks, trails, and beach accesses in the District of Central Saanich (District). They are places where we can enjoy nature, exercise, relax, and have fun with our family and friends. But we also know that some of these facilities need attention and improvement to serve our community better, both now and in the future. That's why we are working on a new Parks and Trails Master Plan to update our vision and priorities for these valuable public spaces.

The new plan will involve listening to you, the residents, and visitors of the district, to find out your needs and wants from your parks and trails. We will also assess the current condition and use of our facilities and identify their natural and physical features. We will look at how our parks and trails connect with each other and with other important places in the district, such as schools, shops, and community centres. We will also consider how our parks and trails can support our goals for environmental protection, health and wellness, accessibility, and social inclusion.

The result will be a new Parks and Trails Master Plan to help guide our decisions and actions for the next 10 to 20 years. The plan will build on the work we have already done through the Official Community Plan review, the Active Transportation Plan, the Saanichton Village Design Plan, the Age-Friendly Community Plan, the Accessibility Plan, and others. The new Parks and Trails Master Plan will help us make our parks and trails more attractive, functional, and sustainable for everyone to enjoy.



Engagement Overview

Public engagement is a critical part of updating the Central Saanich Parks and Trails Master Plan to capture and reflect how you and your family use parks, trails and beaches in the District. In September 2023, we launched the first phase of engagement to gather feedback from impacted parties, residents, visitors, user groups, community organizations, and District departments. Two more phases will follow.

The purpose of this initial phase of engagement was to provide opportunities to gather input on the strengths, needs, and opportunities for the development of the new Parks and Trails Master Plan. The insights collected are part of the overall assessment and analysis of parks, trails, and beaches.

As part of the engagement activities, the District held community conversations with residents, community partners, schools and students, recreation users, environmental groups, First Nations, and District Staff.

Participants were asked:

- How often, when, and where do you use Central Saanich Parks, trails, and beaches?
- What are your favourite activities in Central Saanich parks, trails, and beaches?
- What improvements would you like for Central Saanich parks, trails, and beaches?
- What challenges do you have in using Central Saanich parks, trails, and beaches?
- What environmental priorities should be included in the Parks and Trails Master Plan?
- What should be the key priorities for the Parks and Trails Master Plan?



Round 1 Engagement Opportunities

Pop-up Events

- Peninsula Country Market, Oct 7, 2023 (70 participants)
- Saanichton Green Park, Oct 20, 2023 (3 participants)
- Panorama Recreation Centre, Oct 20, 2023 (10 participants)
- Rom Knott Park, Oct 26, 2023 (40 participants)
- Centennial Park, Nov 25, 2023 (25 participants)

Community Open House

- Multicultural Centre Nov 18, 2024 (60 participants)

Survey

- Public Survey, Oct 19, 2023 – Dec 15, 2023 (267 participants)

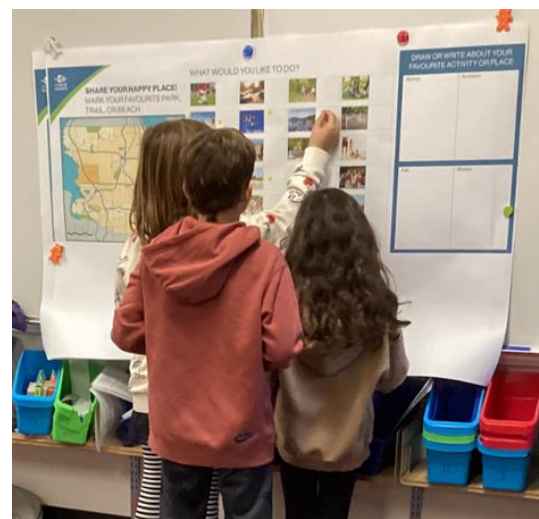
Workshops

- Environmental Group, Dec 5, 2023 (6 participants)
- Community Partners, Dec 10, 2023 (3 participants)
- Dog User Group, Dec 10, 2023 (3 participants)
- Equestrian User Group, Dec 11, 2023 (6 participants)
- Vulnerable User Group, February 1, 2026 (3 participants)
- Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC), January 25, 2023
- PEPAKƏŃ HÁUTW Foundation, W̱SÁNEĆ based restoration and education organization, Feb 2, 2024 (6 participants)
- Parks & Environment Committee, April 4, 2024

- Recreation User Group, March 27, 2024 (survey and open house)

School Workshops

- Grade 2, 3 & 5, Nov 24, 2023 (45 students)
- Grade 12, Dec 12, 2023 (22 students)



Staff Focus Groups

- Roads staff, Dec 7, 2023 (12 participants)
- Enforcement / Emergency staff, Nov 15, 2023 (3 participants)
- Parks staff, Nov 23, 2023 (9 participants)
- General staff, Nov 17, 2023 (30 participants)

Partner Meetings

- Local municipalities
- Panorama Recreation Commission
- Tsartlip First Nation – May 2024
- Tsawout First Nation – Phase 2
- School District 63 – Phase 2

Engagement at a Glance



626 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED BY PROVIDING FEEDBACK



352 people participated in-person activities



60 attended an open house



148 people attended pop up events



267 completed a survey



78 people participated in workshops



7 provided feedback through email



67 students participated in school presentations



LET'S TALK, CENTRAL SAANICH - ONLINE ENGAGEMENT



1,030 people visited the Online project webpage (total)



51 downloaded a document



245 connected via Centralsaanich.ca



132 connected via Facebook



101 connected via Google

What We Heard: User Groups and Partners

The project team met with many groups who use, care and support parks, trails and beaches in Central Saanich. Internal workshops were also held for Central Saanich Staff who support parks, trails and beaches to share their feedback; staff input complemented and expanded on community feedback.

The following summarizes insights shared by each of these groups.

Elementary School

We want to thank teachers and grade 2, 3 & 5 students from Keating Elementary School

Elementary school students enjoy a variety of outdoor activities, such as sports, bike riding and climbing. There was an overwhelming consensus from all classes that children would like to have more opportunities to explore nature, more natural areas to play and climbing areas and treehouses similar to Wild Play. In addition, some of the key themes were more outdoor pool and water activities, food trucks or places to buy food in parks, horse trails, picnic spots, water access for kayaking and paddleboarding. Their suggestions for improving the playgrounds included adding enclosed slides, taller monkey bars (for ages 10+), shared sports equipment and improved surfaces. The teachers at Keating would appreciate access to currently unused parkland with a creek in Copper Ridge, which they would like to use for outdoor education activities.



Secondary School

We want to thank the teachers and grade 12 students from Stelly's Secondary School

High School students shared they would like more beach and water access including sand areas for volleyball and hanging out, as well as boat ramps. They also care about restoration, volunteer opportunities and wildlife viewing.

Participants did not have as much interest in organized sports or skate park amenities, and preferred places to hang out with food trucks and basic facilities such as washrooms, water fountains and sheltered areas.

PEPAKEN HÁUTW Foundation First Nations

We want to thank the PEPÁKEN HÁUTW Foundation, a local Indigenous environmental group for sharing their knowledge as local leaders in invasive removal, restoration and education.

The group discussed the need for standardized practices and resources for disposing of invasive species, such as using a mobile incinerator. They also suggested restoring native plant systems, such as by spending less time on horticulture and more on native plants, which are more tolerant to drought and lower maintenance as well as be providing cultural and medicinal benefits.

Other feedback included partnering with W̱SÁNEĆ organizations to add educational signage to parks, pursuing SENĆOŦEN revitalization opportunities, and providing safe access to harvest areas for W̱SÁNEĆ people by clearly delineating areas with signage during harvest.

Additional suggestions included public education on the cultural, spiritual and medicinal importance of the plants, creating seed libraries and bird and bat boxes could promote environmental stewardship in parks. They also suggested working with local Indigenous groups to identify and restore areas of significance and seeking W̱SÁNEĆ people to be involved in and work on restoration.

Environmental Groups

We want to thank environmental partners including Peninsula Streams, HAT (Land Protection management) and local Girl Guide leader / invasives / restoration.

The Environmental group talked about how protecting the environment can help threatened ecosystems. They mentioned the value of open spaces, nature parks, and connectivity for recreation, conservation, and health.

They identified challenges and opportunities for improving the parks and trails system and gave suggestions for enhancing natural assets and amenities, and creating more park areas. They stressed the need to increase awareness and engagement with local communities including Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nations on the effect of users on parks, and conservation measures.

They underlined the significance of connectivity, the need to safeguard ecosystems, and resolving shared-use issues. Special areas of interest include strengthening resilience in parks and wetlands, the importance of flood control, and the support of regional planning.



Community Partners

Thank you to community partners including Parents Advisory Council, Disc Golf Society, and Lions Club

Community partners highlighted the need for planned improvements such as signage, safety, accessibility, and enhancements in the Active Transportation Plan. They also talked about how to deal with increased growth and densification by creating multi-use spaces and sports fields, community gardens, and providing outdoor exercise opportunities. They emphasized the need for more unstructured spaces for children to be creative, as well as shore access and parking improvements.

They highlighted activities such as disc golf as a green, low-cost, and inclusive sport anyone can play, regardless of their age or background; discussion about the popularity of the sport in the region and the busy course at Bayside Middle School. They suggested possible locations such as Adam Kerr Park, Centennial Park, and Saanich Fairgrounds to provide more unstructured sports activities for all ages.

Dog User Group

We want to thank the RD Dogg Society, CRD DOGGS and DRAFP for participating

The group emphasized the importance of keeping trail space for dogs while ensuring safety for all by providing fenced areas for training and clearly identifying environmentally sensitive areas. They stressed the need for effective communication and signage and responsible dog ownership with a preference for leashing to be a last resort. In addition to sharing some people with accessibility are unable to use a leash. They would like to see clear definitions and including “under control” bylaws for dogs and identified terminology has changed from off leash to leash optional.

They identified Centennial Park as a great place to walk dogs and noted the take a bag, leave a bag is not ideal and would prefer to see bag dispensers and more garbage cans. Additionally, they would like to see any policy changes be developed based on facts and sharing information to build understanding and awareness with dog and non-dog users. Key issues they raised include education for park and trail users, clearly marking environmentally sensitive areas and identification when people are entering a leash-optional area.

Equestrian User Groups

We want to thank equestrian users, the Central Saanich Equestrian and Horse Community Facebook owner, and the Elk Beaver Lake Equestrian Society

Equestrian user groups highlighted the need for better signage especially for non-equestrians to understand how to share the trail with horses. Trail etiquette is important to reduce conflicts between off-leash dogs and horses, and between bikes and horses. There is a need for wider multi-use paths, amenities such as washrooms, mounting blocks, and tie-up places, and for volunteers to help with education and input on signage.

They highlighted the need to include equestrian access and use in plans and communication material within the master plan and in other district planning activities. Equestrians are a large part of the

economy in Central Saanich, and safe connectivity is needed. Access to parks is challenging due to the lack of easements or bridled paths, and some roads are unsafe for horses.

Some ideas shared by the group include having wider riding trails throughout the community, improving the safety of the Elk Lake to Mount Newton connection, and organizing cross-over events between food production farms, wineries, and horse farms. There is also a need for more parking for horse trailers, and for municipal/community-supported riding rings.

Equestrian users have no central stakeholder body, so it is important to make sure they are not forgotten. Greenhawk Vancouver Island and Victoria Saddlery are the primary hubs for equestrians in the district, and a good place to share information. They also identified the need for a horse count/census.

Recreation User Group

We want to thank the many local groups that provided feedback about their experiences running programs in our parks.

Groups noted that overall they are pleased with the facilities and their maintenance as well as the booking system. Some would like to see additional washrooms, shaded areas and water dispensers installed at the Centennial tennis courts, more ball diamonds. Some accessibility improvements would be beneficial, such as wider, accessibly serviced access points to key amenities from parking lots and transit stops. For example, sidewalks and pathways from Wallace Drive onto Hovey Road towards the playground and picnic shelters at Centennial Park.

Vulnerable Populations

We want to thank Pacifica Housing for participating

Vulnerable people use parks and trails in Central Saanich for tenting, sheltering, and socializing. Parks with more tenting are typically close to amenities, food, and places to go for warmth. Larger parks are preferred for privacy and separation from other park users. Safety is also a concern, with some preferring to walk at night and sleep in the park during the day.

There is a preference for central locations, well-lit areas, and access to public washrooms and water, especially when it is cold. Regular contact with unhoused, referrals to outreach, and bylaw enforcement needs to come from a place of compassion. Conflict may occur and education for other park users and adjacent residents may help reduce incidents.

Other key issues to consider for vulnerable populations include bathroom and shower access, hot water availability, drainage in parks, and recognition of increase in the average age of people experiencing homelessness and related health issues related to mobility.

Accessibility User Group

We want to thank the participants from the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC)

The group identified improving accessibility in parks in Central Saanich includes adopting standardized practices and resources for accessibility, such as gravel surfacing and compacting and the addition of picnic tables with cutouts for wheelchairs.

They also shared the importance of partnering with local organizations and following best practices to improve accessibility in parks and trails. Ideas such as maps, trail ratings, accessibility ratings, and the use of technology to provide information on parks or adding virtual tours to see the area before visiting.

They also identified the importance of the tree canopy for shade and regulating temperatures and accessing beaches and the water with beach mats. They emphasized the importance of considering the needs of all users, including those with mobility challenges, and the value of a coordinated approach to improving accessibility in parks and recreation.

Highlights from Central Saanich Staff

Central Saanich staff are committed to the community as staff and residents. They were asked to provide comments and insight based their experiences. The comments received from staff closely reflect what we also heard in the community.

The top priorities identified by staff include the removal of invasive species, maintaining the tree canopy, reducing surface fuels and following FireSmart best practices for maintenance, providing convenient and safe alternatives to travelling by car, improving GIS, protecting rare habitats such as Oak Haven/Gore, incorporating climate resilience into park design, and showing a balance between FireSmart principles and good environmental management. They also identified being a steward for FireSmart practices and risk reduction.

To improve parks, consider adding trail signs in Centennial Park, coordinating volunteer activities for park clean-up, adding a small dog off-leash fenced area, increasing the number of off-leash dog-friendly areas, adding shade for playgrounds, increasing the number of washrooms, adding bike racks at parks, adding drinking water, and acquiring more parkland south of Island View on the coast.

Trails improvements identified include signage, access, parking, connections, mapping, expansion, maintenance, lighting, and natural covering. There is also a need for improved connectivity, relations with First Nations to connect trails and parks, and consideration for multi-use access.

Beach areas and access improvements include adding boat launches, particularly on the east side of the district and in the peninsula, improving GIS, increasing public parking for kayak launches, and improving the accessibility of beach accesses. Other areas mentioned include improving path connectivity, adding programs to learn about the environment, improving Newman Farm and Newman Park Beach, adding picnic benches, and improving Transfer Beach Park.

Other key areas to focus on in their Parks and Trails Master Plan, including managing conflicts, creating trails, addressing parking violations, improving GIS, adding boat launches, promoting parks, using SENĆOŦEN names and creating partnerships with First Nations, setting aside funds for park acquisition, maintenance, and improvement, making beach accesses more accessible, resolving trail conflicts, making cycling more accessible, taking Fire Smart actions, controlling off-leash dogs, providing space for a First Nations Cultural Centre, updating safety classifications, creating a consistent plan for transportation and infrastructure, and organizing events in the parks.

Parks & Environment Committee

The District's Parks and Environment Committee is comprised of appointed Councillors and members of the public involved in local environmental groups.

The Committee feedback included the topic of land acquisition, such as encouraging property donations, partnering with Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nation, and ensuring there is access to Cooperridge Park and underscoring the importance of access to parkland for Keating Elementary, which is across the road from Cooperridge (echoed by Keating Elementary staff). Also, the need to apply a gender lens to future data to understand how different genders use parks, trail and beaches and whether there are different needs. As the plan develops gauging the community's appetite for future funding was also suggested. Committee members noted a need for more volunteerism in the parks, possibly a formal Friends of Central Saanich Parks group, and suggested a volunteer coordinator to mobilize the work. Diverting beautification to invasive removals, raised by other groups, was also echoed from the committee. The group discussed dogs in parks and the impact on environmental efforts and need for a fenced dog park, with Adam Kerr Park suggested.

Priorities and Values for the Parks & Trails Master Plan

Top Priorities

Participants in the survey, user groups and at events shared the top priority areas for the Parks and Trails Master Plan. The priorities were consistent across parks, trails and beaches, highlighting the need to ensure all areas are accessible and safe for all users by improving connectivity, signage and infrastructure while maintaining a natural feel of the rural Central Saanich area.



Accessibility for all users to access beaches, trails, and parks in all weather.

- Improve trail width, surfaces, and signage ratings for accessibility.
- Ensure beach / water access including mats and boat launches are cleared and maintained.
- Ensure paved areas for wheelchair and stroller access.
- Expand accessible washrooms, parking, and use of curb cut outs.



Connectivity between communities, neighbourhoods, and link to other networks.

- Provide better bike trails connecting Central Saanich such as Lochside.
- Connect trails in residential areas to and from rural areas and to schools.
- Ensure continuous connectivity of trail systems.



Dog Friendly Initiatives including responsible dog ownership.

- Provide off-leash dog areas to enjoy nature and trails with dogs.
- Ways for dogs to remain under control for the safety of people and sensitive natural areas, whether it be on-leash requirements, animal-free areas, or enforcement.



Environment Protection of the natural areas, wildlife, and natural ecosystems.

- Keep the parks as natural as possible and maintain green spaces.
- Remove invasive species and plant of native species.
- Maintain and expand forest canopy.



Infrastructure improvements including maintenance and expanding facilities.

- Expand availability of washrooms, parking, and boat launches.
- Update playgrounds with more natural feature (trees, boulders) and places to climb; also add zipline features
- Add desired youth amenities including pump tracks/bike parks and pool/splash parks.
- Ensure funding is available for maintenance and improvements.
- Expand designated trails and access to parks for horses including designated spaces for parking.



Safety for all users including signage, interaction, connectivity, and lighting.

- Address multi-user trail safety (dogs, pedestrians, bikes, horses) such as dog incidents, and e-bike usage.
- Provide safe connections for walkers and cyclists using bike lanes, trails, and sidewalks.
- Improve lighting at parks, commuter trails, and crosswalks for evening/winter use.



Trail marking & signage to identify activities, wayfinding signage, and education.

- Provide educational signage about flora, fauna, and Indigenous significance including SENLOTEN names.
- Add education and wayfinding through signage, maps, GIS, and information on trails.
- Take a regional partnership approach to maps, guides, icons on trails.



Environmental Priorities

Participants in the survey, user groups and at events shared their environmental priorities highlighting the importance of preservation and restoration of habitat, species, and plants. Environmental groups highlighted the value of connecting parks and trails, honouring the natural and cultural values of the land, and offering multi-use and accessible spaces for people and wildlife. They complimented the District for its stewardship of some parks, such as Centennial and Oak Haven. They identified issues and possibilities for the parks and trails system, such as dog management, invasive species, climate action, ecosystem services, watershed management, stormwater management, tree canopy protection, and rare and sensitive species conservation.

Protecting native species: including the preservation of and restoration of natural habitat, protection of native species and plants.

- Trail mulching for root protection of trees in trails and parks.
- Protect native plants, trees, and plants with fencing from humans and dogs.
- Conserve and restore tree canopies in parks and trails.
- Preserve Garry Oak meadows and plant native species.

Protect sensitive ecosystems including wildlife, shorelines and stream corridors, parks, trails, and meadows.

- Protect stream corridors within parks and shorelines from invasive gardens.
- Provide identification and educational signage and signage for pathways.
- Provide a protected areas for Brant Geese, Sandpipers, and other shorebirds at Island View.
- Improve facilities adding garbage bins, fencing to protect sensitive, areas and promote responsible dog ownership with on leash requirements in sensitive areas.

Invasive species and management including the removal of Ivy, Cyclamen, Broom, Daphne.

- Create volunteer opportunities for management of invasive species.
- Create parks classifications (potential classifications could include conservation, nature, recreation, shoreline).
- Zoning to protect intertidal zone 300 m from high water mark into water.

Incorporate climate resilience into design through zoning, protection, and promotion of active transportation.

- Provide zoning for conservation areas including a plan to buy back natural park areas including wetlands and riparian areas.
- Irrigation for new plantings and plant choice to replace species affected by climate change.
- Promote active transportation in new developments.

Incorporate green space into developments while maintaining agricultural areas.

- Designing new developments to capture stormwater management and green space as part of the design (e.g., as part of the Butler Pit redevelopment).

Most Valued about Parks, Trails and Beaches

When asked what the most valued aspects of Central Saanich’s parks, trails, and beaches area, survey results were similar to feedback gathered during events and through user groups highlighting the opportunity to get outside and exercise, connectivity within the community, ease of access and suitability for all ages. They also recognized the importance of protecting natural areas and wildlife corridors.



80% Opportunities to exercise



64% Trail connectivity within the community



60% Ease to access



59% Suitable for all ages



58% Environmental protection (natural areas)

Top five answers % of respondents (able to select all that apply)

What We Heard: Parks, Trails & Beaches

The following section summarizes the key feedback collected from Pop Up Events, the Open House and community survey for parks, trails and beach access including survey data outlining usage, activities, accessibility, highlights and areas to improve.

Parks in Central Saanich

The feedback gathered for Parks in Central Saanich during events and the survey was consistent with the insights from the user groups and partner workshops highlighting additional amenities, accessibility, signage, concern for the environment and climate change and challenges with infrastructure and planning.

The community shared options for adding **amenities** for different age groups and interests including natural parks and play areas that foster outdoor adventures and creativity. Other popular suggestions included zip lines and ninja courses, outdoor pools and spray parks, giant slides, pump tracks/bike parks, covered spaces, accessible playgrounds, and benches.

Accessibility for walkers and those using mobility devices in parks can be improved by creating smooth and wide pathways, ramps, and railings. Additional wayfinding signage, maps, and improvements to cell service was also identified to improve information sharing.



The community cares about addressing **invasive species** and **preserving green spaces**. They suggest supporting volunteer participation, reserving conservation zones, protecting natural wetlands and wildlife habitats, completing FireSmart assessments, and planning for climate resilience.

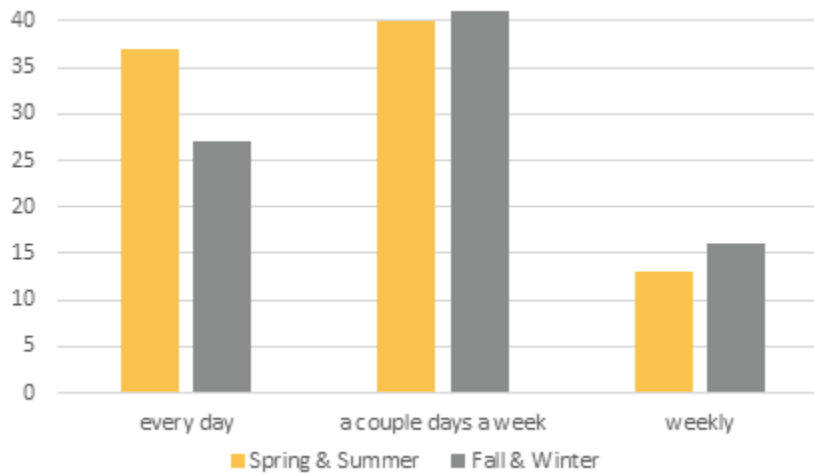
The community notes issues with the existing **infrastructure**, such as poor lighting, unsafe parking and traffic, aging roads, and tree root impacts.

They express the need for **responsible dog ownership** and planning ahead and **funding to accommodate the growing population**.

Survey Results - Parks

This following survey results provide an overview of park usage throughout the year, popular parks, uses, barriers and key ways to increase park usage.

The survey respondents are not a representative sample of the population, and in particular youth participated in in-person engagement activities. Their usage of playgrounds does drop during the colder and wetter weather.



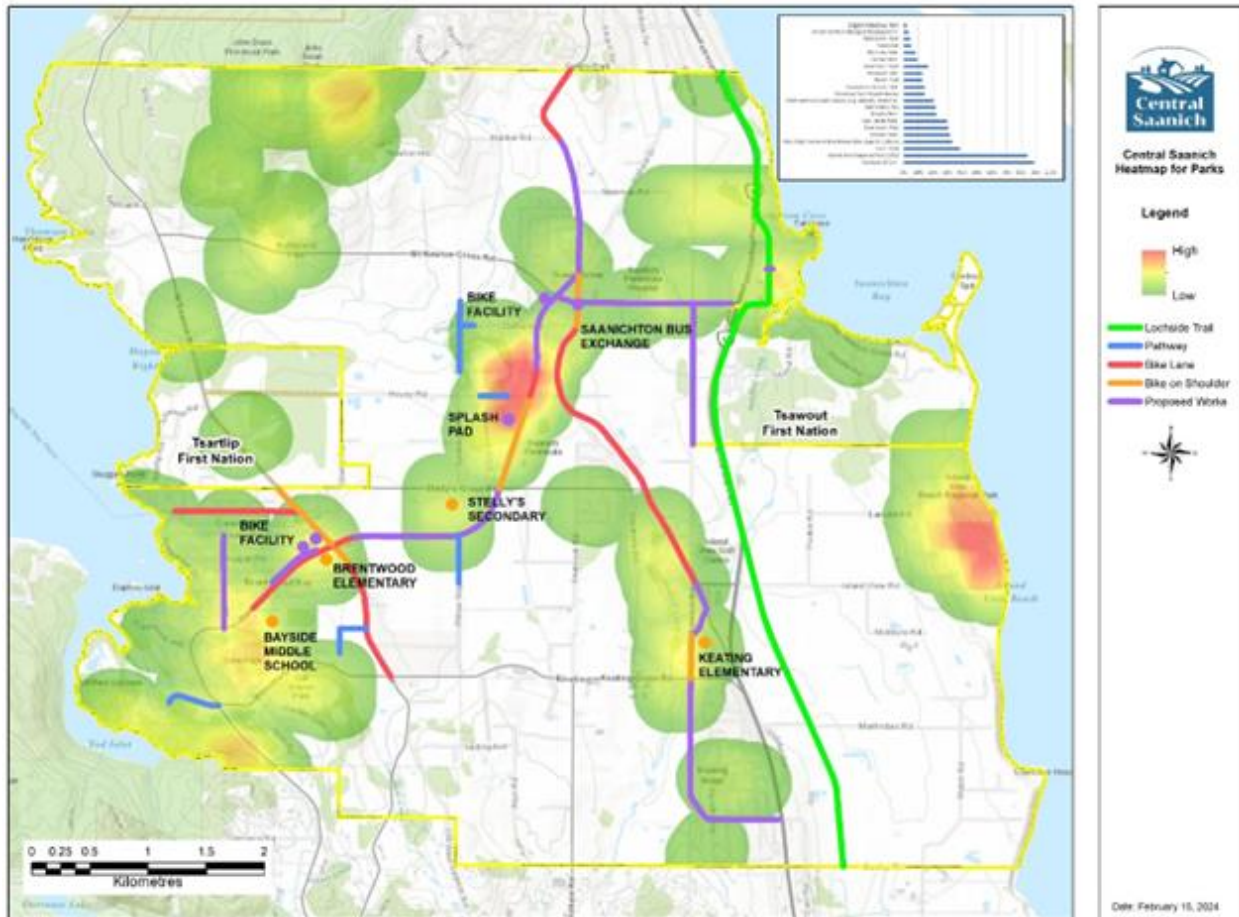
How often do you visit Parks in Central Saanich?

Of survey respondents, there is a small decline in their use of parks throughout the seasons. In the Spring and Summer, 37% of survey respondents visit Central Saanich parks every day, 40% visit a couple of days a week and 13% visit weekly. During the Fall and Winter, the number of survey respondents who visit Central Saanich parks every day decreases to 27%, 41% visit a couple of days a week and 16% visit weekly.



What parks do you use in Central Saanich?

Centennial Park and Island view Park are the most visited parks in Central Saanich with over 80% of survey respondents indicating they visit these parks. Oak Haven, Rom Knott, Verdier, HEL, HELIC, and Gore Parks are visited by over 30% of the respondents.

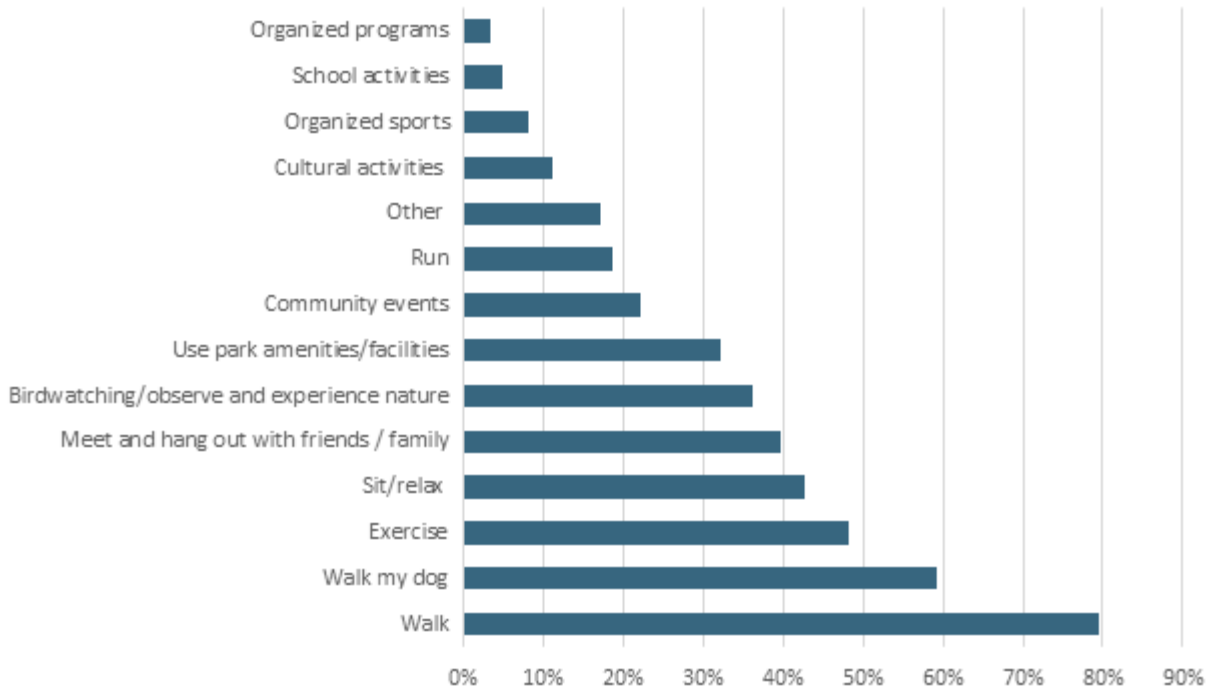


Map based on which parks survey respondents visit (1,345 responses - participants could select more than one option). Overlaid with 2024-2027 active transportation infrastructure plan.

What types of activities do you do in Central Saanich Parks?

The top five activities of survey respondents in local parks include

1. walking,
2. walking their dog,
3. exercising,
4. relaxing, and
5. hanging out with friends and families.



1131 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

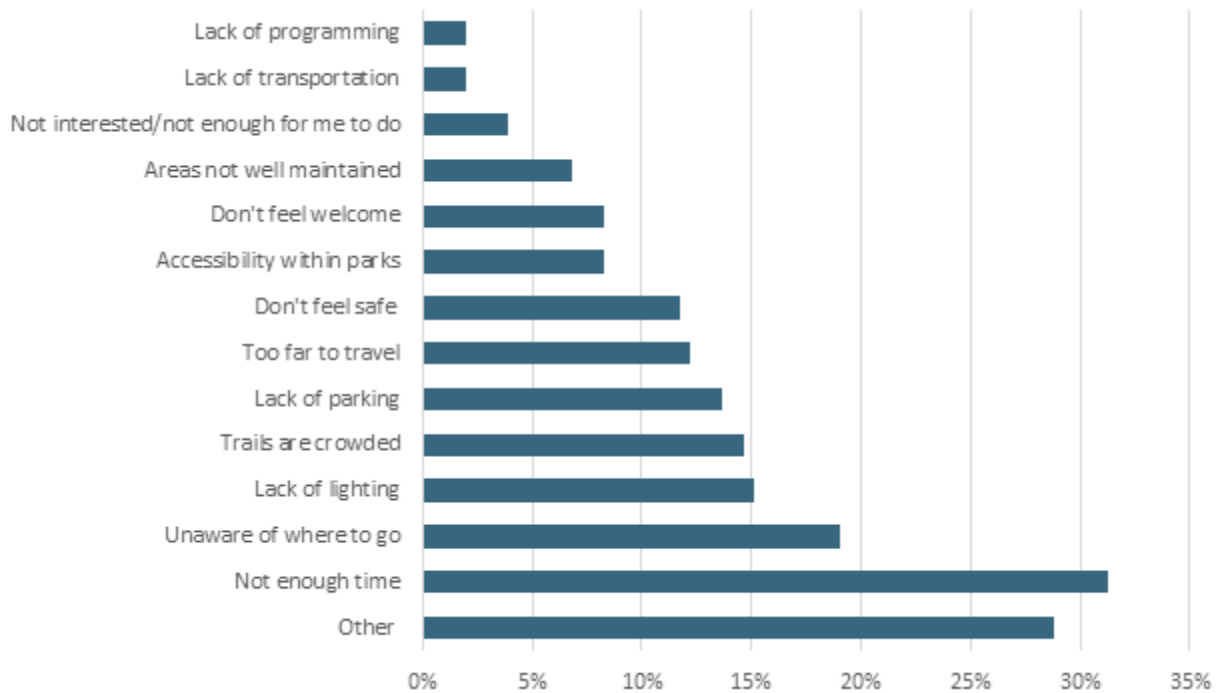
What barriers prevent you from using Central Saanich Parks

According to the survey results, a lack of time was the primary barrier to visiting parks. Barriers more within the District’s control include:

- **unsure of where to go** - highlighting the need for improved signage and wayfinding to better connect trails and neighbourhoods to parks
- **lack of lighting** - better lighting in parks and playgrounds during the fall and winter months was also identified as an area for improvement
- **trails are crowded**

Other barriers

- **Parking facilities** – highlighting need for sufficient safe parking, places that accommodate horse trailers, and options to increase bike access.
- **Accessibility** - emphasized the need for accessible washrooms and improving access to beaches.
- **Feeling unsafe** - 12% of survey respondents cited feeling unsafe as a barrier. Safety concerns were due to off-leash dogs and suggested wider pathways and dedicated off leash areas. Other safety issues mentioned included access to flush toilets, handwashing stations and safe bike routes to get to parks.



364 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

What would encourage you to use parks more often or year-round?

Respondents were asked to highlight items that would encourage them to use parks year-round. The responses highlighted five key areas:



Responsible Dog Ownership:

- Designated areas for leashed and off-leash dogs with fencing and adequate drainage, where dogs could play and exercise freely.
- Concerns about safety with unleashed or aggressive dogs and the need for more trails or areas where dogs could access nature and water, or where they could avoid conflicts with other users.



Connectivity:

- Connecting trails to parks with safe crossings and wider multi-use paths for walking, biking, and horse riding such as Tanner Ridge/Keating to Lochside Trail, and from Chatterton Park to Benvenuto.
- Safer pedestrian crossings and sidewalks on roads, such as Cultra Ave., Hovey Rd. and Wallace Drive.
- More walk-through paths that inter-connect various roads, trails, cul-de-sacs, and beach areas.



Accessibility:

- Easier access to the beach, especially at Newman Park and Oceanside RV resort.
- Safe bike route from Tanner Ridge/Keating to Lochside Trail.
- Improved horse access to some parks and trails, including parking for horse trailers and clear accessible paths and washrooms.



Safety:

- Improved signage, maps, and information boards.
- Lighting in dog parks, playgrounds, and lighting on paths during the fall and winter,
- Cooling areas and ensuring emergency access (identified by Emergency Management and Enforcement staff)



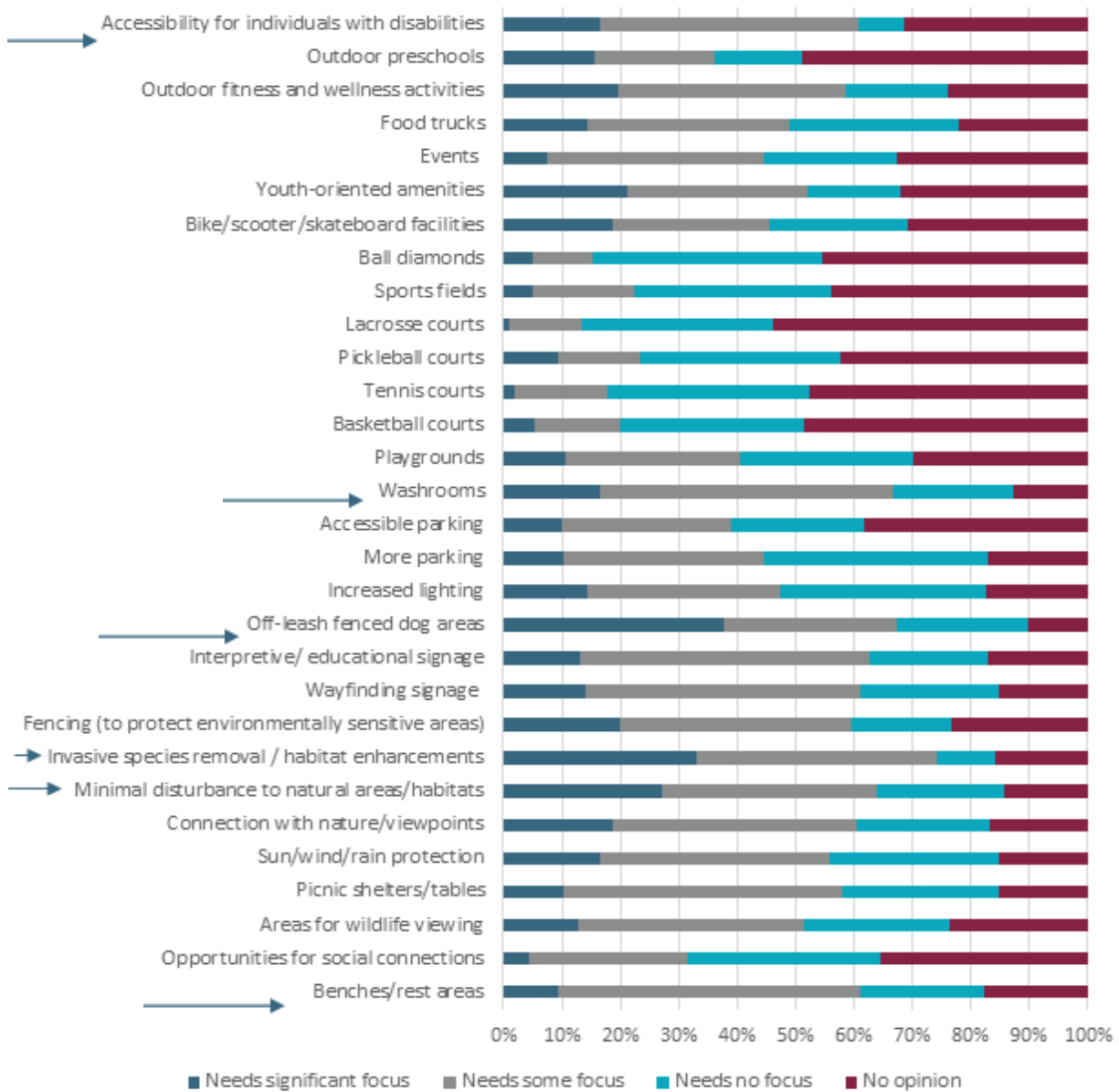
Amenities and Facilities:

- Covered areas including playgrounds, picnic areas and benches to shelter from the elements such as rain and sun.
- Washrooms, parking, parks for older kids such as bike track/park, skate park, and garbage bins for dog waste.

What park features or experiences need more focus and improvement?

The top park features and experiences identified by survey respondents as needing more focus and improvement included:

1. invasive species removal and habitat enhancements/minimal disturbance to natural areas and habitat,
2. washrooms,
3. off-leash fenced dog areas,
4. rest areas/benches, and
5. accessibility.



5,498 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

How well are parks accessible and serve the needs of the following groups?

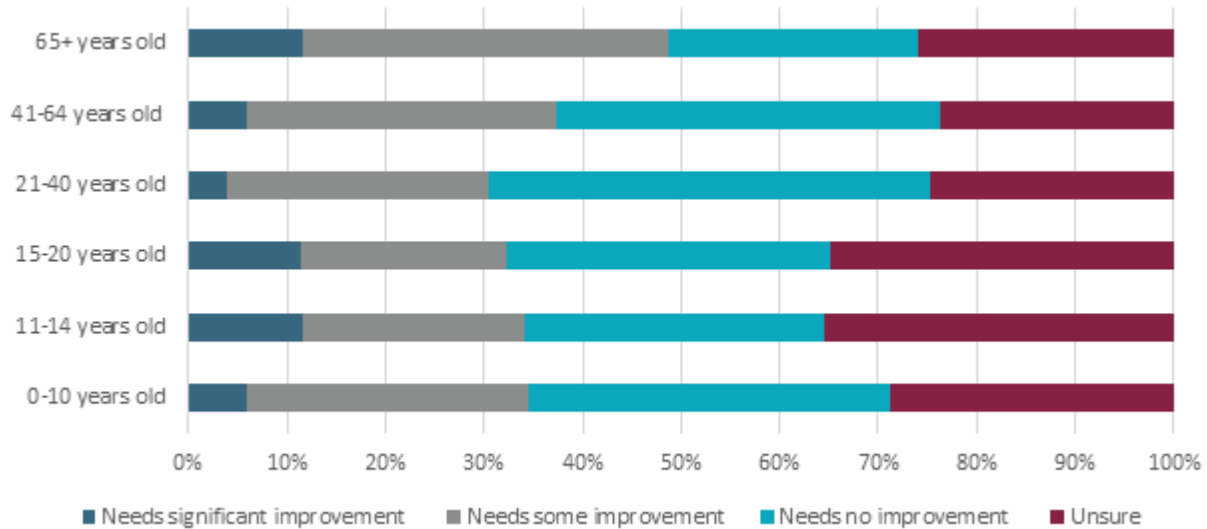
The areas identified by survey respondents as needing significant improvement were for people who are 11-20 years old and over 65 years old. Some improvement is required for parks for those 41 years and older and those under 10 years old.

11-20 year olds

Elementary students shared they would like to see opportunities for natural play areas such as climbing courses, tree houses, and activities similar to Wildplay.

65+

Conversations reveals washrooms, rest areas, covered areas and increased seating a would better serve older adults.



1180 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

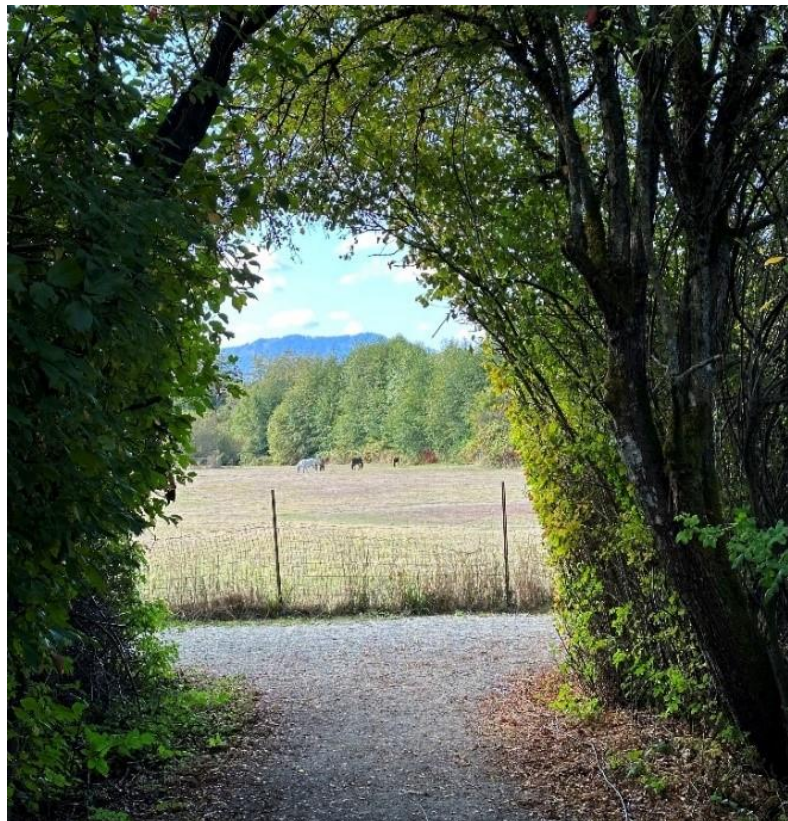
Trails in Central Saanich

The feedback gathered for Trails in Central Saanich during events and the survey was consistent with the insights from the user groups and partner workshops including valuable feedback on how to improve local trails and outdoor spaces, accessibility, connectivity safety, infrastructure, and environmental issues. Accessibility improvements included: parking, bathrooms, covered areas, creating accessible paths, clearly identifying and providing maps.

Connectivity was also identified including trail connections between parks and neighborhoods, as well as urban and rural areas. Multi-use paths and the creation of new trails, such as loop trails, and maintaining and connecting to active transportation networks. Increasing information on trails, including interpretive and wayfinding signage.

Safety is another important consideration, with requests for better signage, including adding horse trail icons on maps, and lighting on trails. Multi-use trail safety for all users, such as bicyclists, walkers, runners, horse riders, and dog walkers including horse-friendly trails with improved connections to active transportation corridors, including bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks.

Infrastructure, amenities, and maintenance are also important, with requests for addressing aging infrastructure, improving trail maintenance with mulching, fire-smart assessments, and providing amenities like bike racks, benches, rest areas, washroom facilities, dog waste disposal, and designated parking areas.



Similar to parks and beaches, environmental protection of trails is also a concern, with requests for educational programs to teach residents about invasive species removal and protecting native species, conserving the tree canopy to protect tree roots, preserving green space and maintaining the natural features of trails, preserving biodiversity and wildlife habitats, and protecting the environment.

Community priorities for trails in Central Saanich:



Accessibility is a key factor, with requests for:

- Identifying and creating accessible paths (rough versus paved)
- Bathroom access, warm water, and more parks with tents/cover in central locations
- Accessible parking



Connectivity

- Trail connections between parks, neighbourhoods, urban and rural areas
- Multi-use paths and creating new trails such as loop trails
- Providing information on trails and wayfinding signage on trails
- Maintaining and connecting Active Transportation networks
- Providing safe and horse-friendly trails
- Improving connections to active transportation corridors including bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks



Safety

- Better signage including adding horse trails icons on maps
- Lighting on trails
- Multi-use trail safety for all users, such as bicyclists, walkers, runners, horse riders, and dog walkers
- Education for other park users/adjacent residents to support unhoused populations using parks



Infrastructure, amenities, and maintenance including:

- Addressing aging infrastructure
- Improving trail maintenance with mulching and fire-smart assessments
- Amenities like bike racks, benches, rest areas, washroom facilities, dog waste disposal and designated parking areas



Environmental protection

- Concerns about invasive species and requests for educational programs to teach residents about invasive species removal and protecting native species,
- Conserving the tree canopy to protect tree roots
- Preserving green space and maintaining the natural features of trails, preserving biodiversity and wildlife habitats, and protecting the environment
- Adding interpretive signage on nature trails for education



Responsible Dog ownership

- Off-leash dogs and a call for responsible dog ownership and education on off-leash etiquette

Survey Results - Trails

The survey results show trail usage is similar to park usage, with more frequent use in the summer and spring and less in the fall and winter.

The most **popular trails** are Island View and Centennial, and people use the trails for activities such as walking, exercising, birdwatching, biking, and spending time with friends and family.

Barriers to trail usage include not knowing where to go, poor lighting, crowded trails, accessibility issues, and lack of connectivity to other areas within the district.

Suggested improvements include adding off-leash dog areas, bike trails, invasive species removal and habitat enhancements, and on-leash dog areas.

Commonly mentioned locations

- Cut-through paths in residential areas
- Access to cut through private property (farms)
 - Access from Brentwood to Saanichton in particular
- Cooperridge parkland (forest access, walking trail)
- Brentwood Drive
- Mt Newton Pathway safety improvements
- Access to other regional trails (mostly access to Lochside from Tanner and Brentwood)

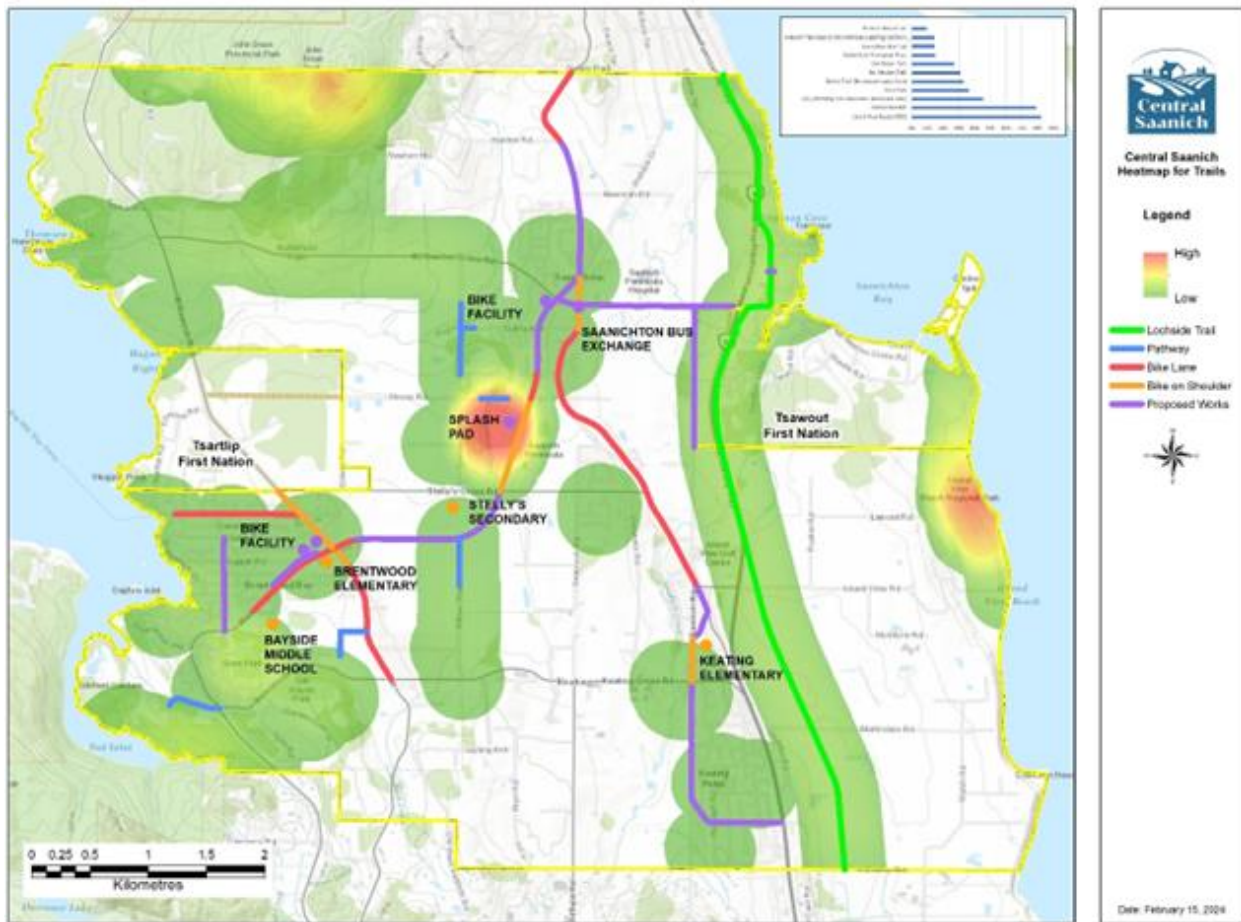


How often do you visit trails in Central Saanich?

In the Spring and Summer, 28% of the survey respondents visit Central Saanich trails every day, 47% visit a least once a week, and 10% visit weekly. The number who visit Central Saanich trails every day decreases to 22% in the fall and winter months, decreases slightly to 43% a few days a week, and 12% visit weekly.

What trails do you use in Central Saanich?

The highest used trails of survey respondents include Island View and Centennial Park followed closely by LAU, WELNEW/John Dean Park Provincial Park and Gore Park.



Map based on which parks survey respondents visit (1,032 responses - participants could select more than one option). Overlaid with 2024-2027 active transportation infrastructure plan.

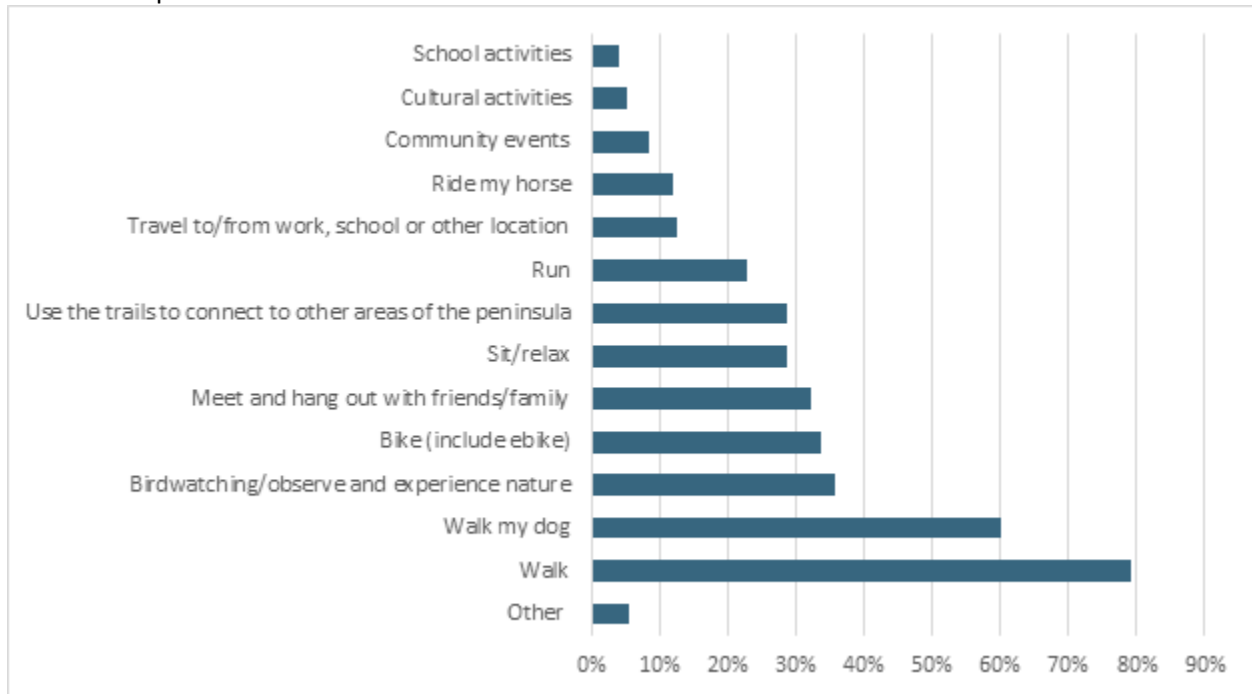
What types of activities do you do along Central Saanich trails?

The top five activities survey respondents participate in along Central Saanich trails include

1. walking,
2. walking their dog,
3. birdwatching and experiencing nature,
4. biking, and
5. hanging out with friends and family.



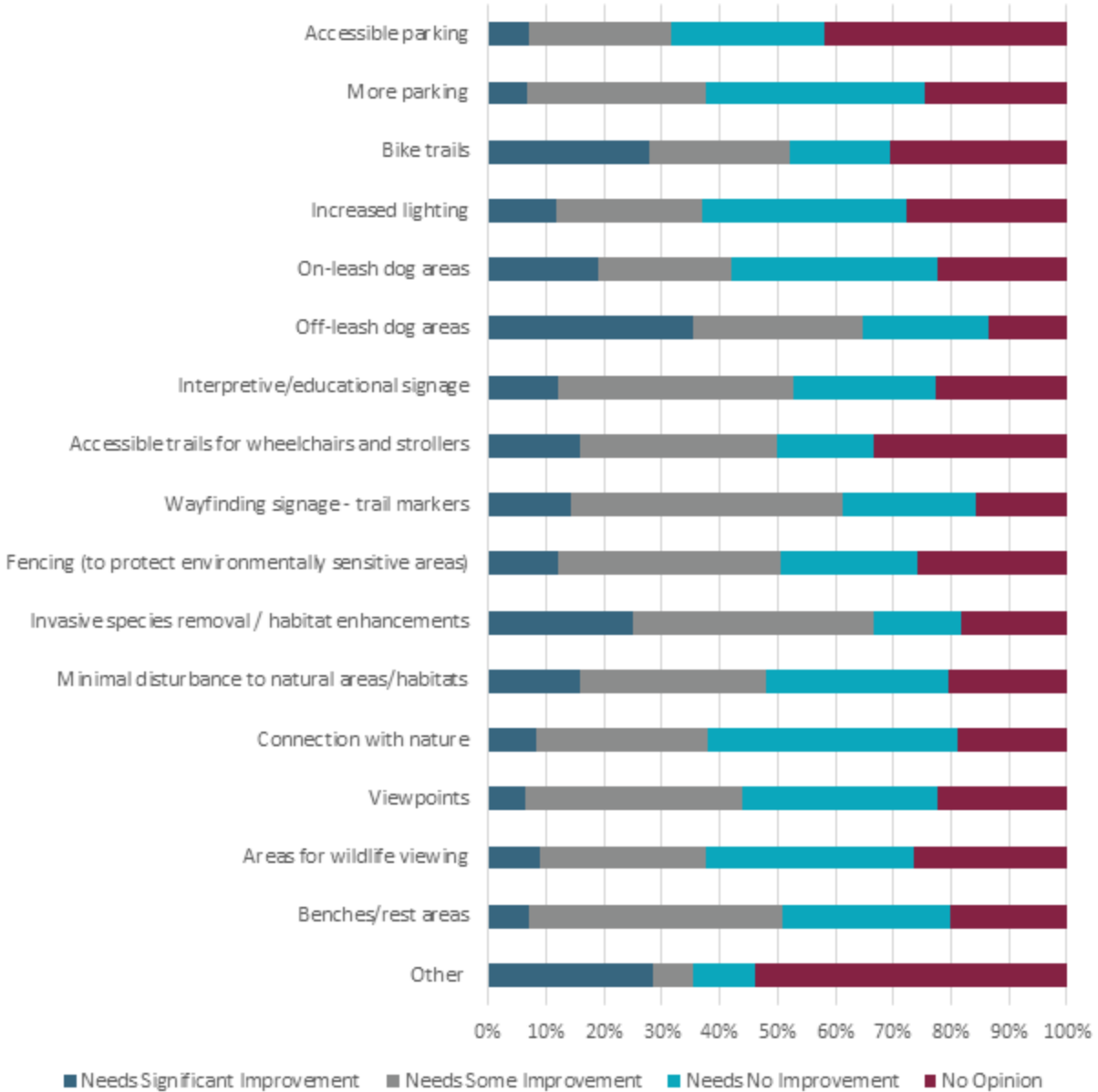
Additional activities include relaxing and connecting to other areas of the peninsula.



975 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

What trail features do you feel need more focus and improvement?

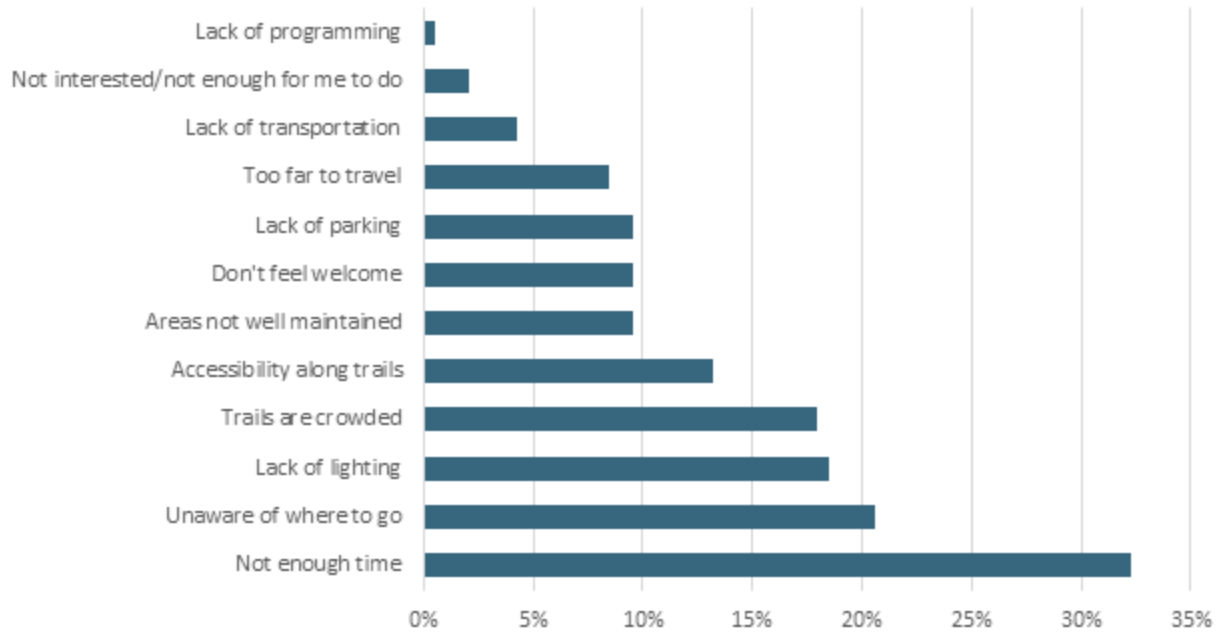
The top features that respondents indicated needed significant improvements included off-leash dog areas, bike trails, invasive species removal/habitat enhancements, and on-leash dog areas.



3,445 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

What barriers prevent you from using the current trails in Central Saanich?

Of respondents who participated in the survey, 32% indicated they didn't have enough time to visit trails. Other barriers included a lack of awareness of where to go, lack of lighting, trails are crowded, and challenges with accessibility along trails. A key theme we heard during engagement activities was the need for trails and active transportation connections.



277 Responses (participants could select more than one option)



Beach Accesses, Docks, and Boat Launches

The feedback gathered for Beach Accesses, Docks and Boat Launches in Central Saanich during events and the survey had similar themes around accessibility, infrastructure, and environmental as in Parks and Trails, it focused more on accessing the shoreline and waterfront.

Overall, they expressed they would like improved beach access including easier access for paddleboards, kayaks, small watercraft, shared sand areas for volleyball or spike ball and more boat launches on both sides of the district and concerns about the state of existing ones.

More amenities at beaches, such as outdoor showers, picnic benches, washrooms, and boardwalks, as well as better accessibility through fixing ramps, improving stairs, and adding accessibility mats. Parking problems at beach access points was also highlighted including unclear parking spots, the need for clear lines and better signs, especially at Hagan Bight-KENNES Viewpoint and Island View Regional Park.



The community would like to see beachfront parks developed and education on beach-related programs, with areas to acquire including parkland south of Island View to improve access to the waterfront. They also shared ideas for creating a continuous boardwalk along Brentwood Drive for waterfront access.

Finally, there is a request for GIS and mapping to locate and label beach accesses and water access points, as well as using buoys to mark access points from the water for kayakers and beach walkers. The community also emphasized the importance of keeping beaches clean through beach cleanups and responsible dog ownership.

Community priorities for Beach Accesses, Docks and Boat Launches:



Accessibility

- Challenges in accessing beaches due to steep access points and stairs
- Improve accessibility to beaches such as access mats
- Concern for access due to private docks



Boat Launches

- Additional boat launches, both on the east and west sides of the district
- Concerns about the condition of existing boat launches, such as at Island View, are raised, along with a call for proper maintenance and repair
- Launch for kayakers, paddle boards and smaller boats



Infrastructure and parking

- Adding amenities like playgrounds, washrooms, picnic benches, and outdoor showers
- Unclear parking, the need for painted parking lines, and better signage
- Beach access markings from the water and GIS mapping



Environmental protection

- Protect sensitive ecosystems and zoning to protect intertidal space
- Involve community involvement, including beach clean-ups, educational programs



Survey Results – Beaches, Docks and Boat Launches

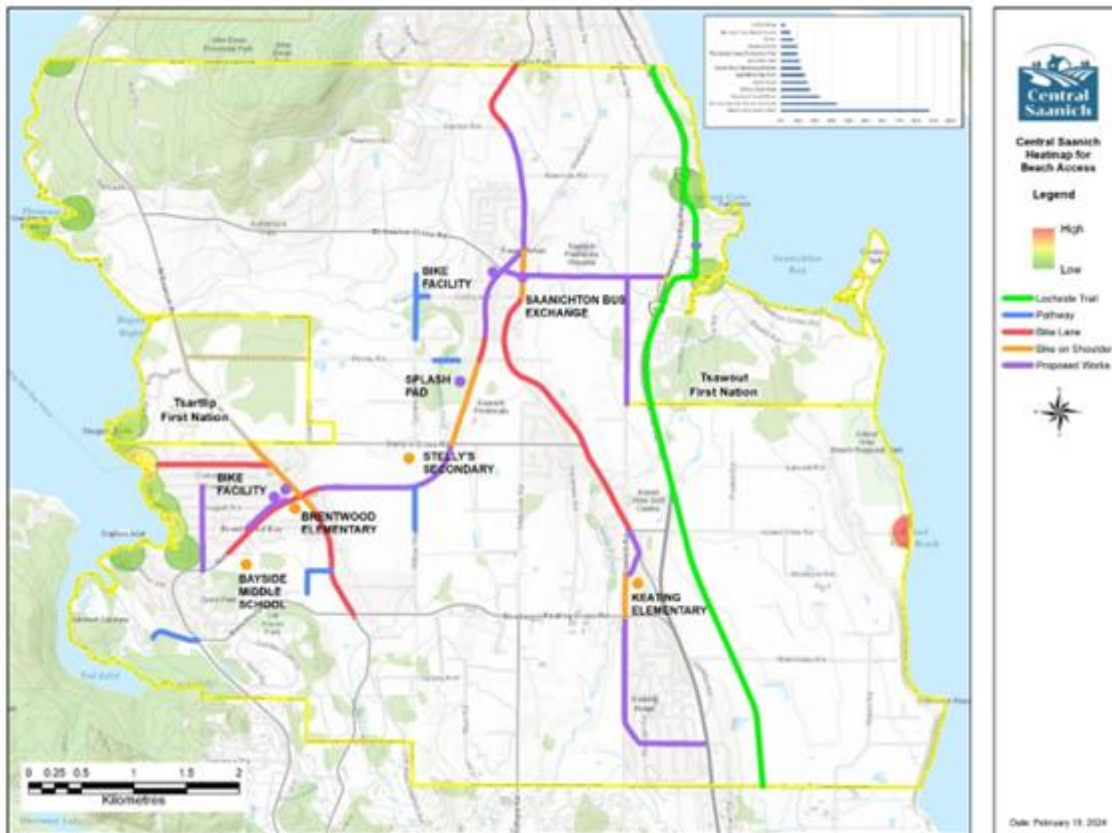
How often do you visit beaches in Central Saanich?

As expected, survey respondents indicated that they frequent local beaches most in the Spring and Summer with 27% visiting a few days a week and only 6% noted they rarely visit.

For respondents who visit in the Winter and Fall, they generally visit monthly (21%) or once a week (19%) and 13% rarely visit beaches in the winter.

What beach access do you use most often?

Over 90% of respondents indicated they visit Island View Beach most often followed by 34% of respondents who visit Verdier Park in Brentwood Bay, and 24% who visit Marchant Road / Wharf.



Map based on which parks survey respondents visit (665 responses - participants could select more than one option). Overlaid with 2024-2027 active transportation infrastructure plan.

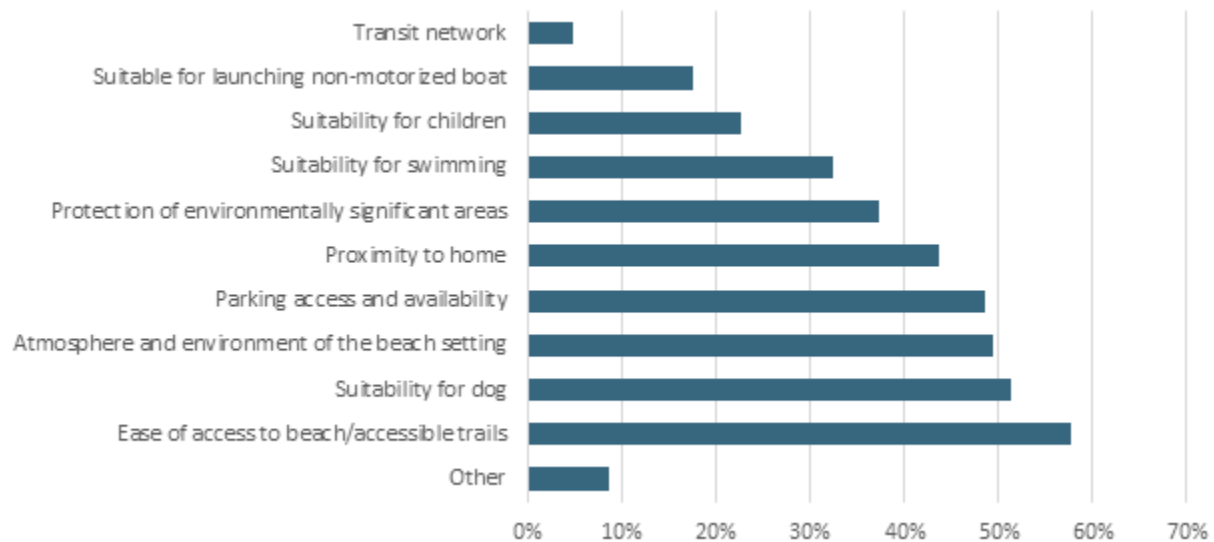
What activities do you do when you visit a beach access?

The top activities the public told us they participate in while accessing beaches in Central Saanich is walking/walking their dog, relaxing and socializing and using non-motorized boats.

What is most important to you about beach access?

Close to 60% of the survey respondents highlighted ease of access to beaches and accessible trails as the most important to accessing beaches.

51% of respondents indicated beaches suitable for dogs followed by 49% indicating the importance of the atmosphere and environment in the beach setting and the availability and access to parking at beaches as important. This data was also highlighted throughout the engagement activities with requests for connectivity to trails and active transportation networks, parking improvements, and improving boat launches, and the ability to launch paddle boats. In addition to increased signage and mapping to identify water access points.



960 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

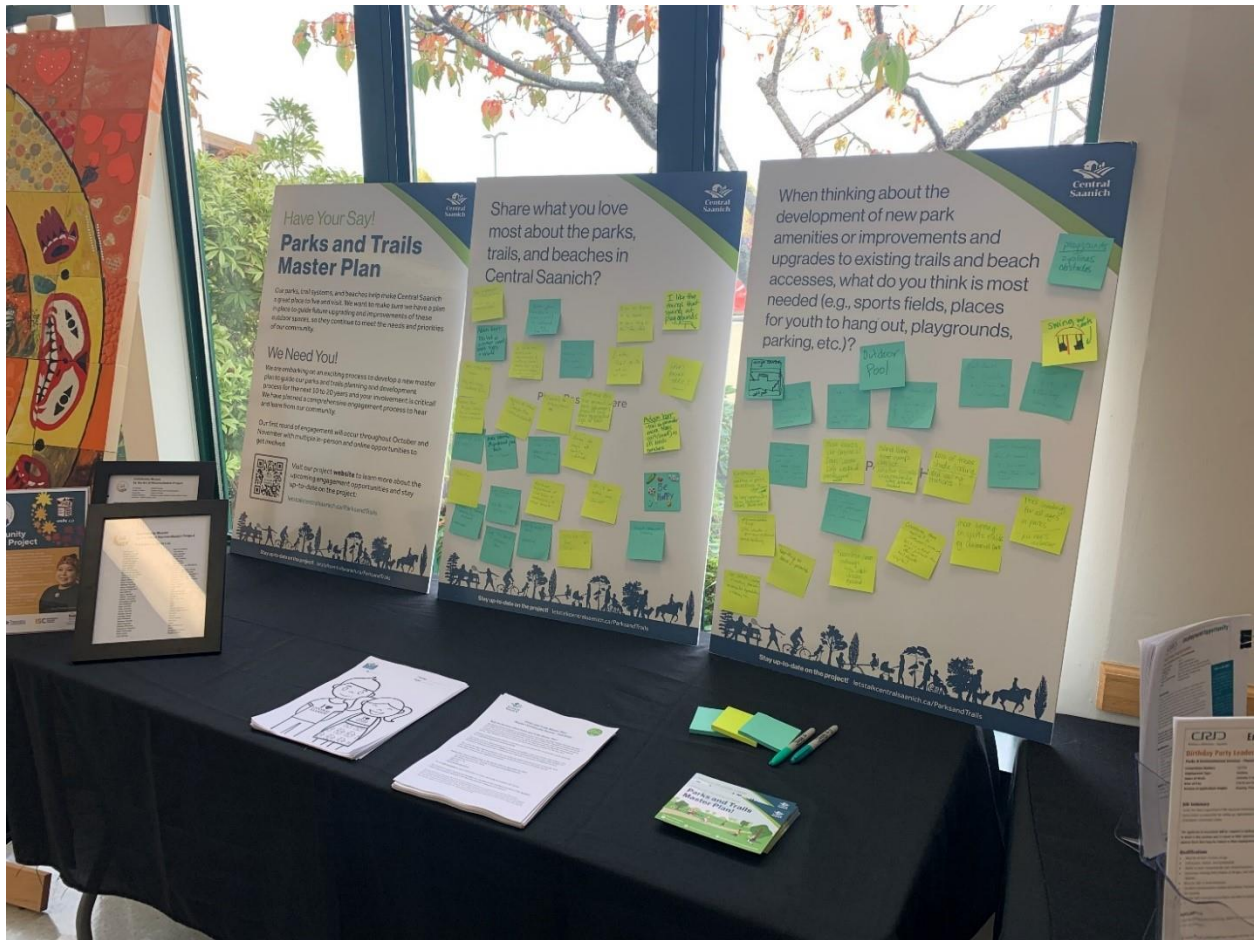
Concerns from residents who live near beach access points.

Residents who live in near beach access points identified concerns about parking, specifically at Marchant in Brentwood Bay and Stelly’s Cross Road Beach access for visitors, kayakers and paddleboarders. They also identified the impact of liveaboards on the environment, including the disposal of sewage and garbage, and the need for designated parking for dinghies and bike racks. Saanichton Bay Park could benefit from improved access, more picnic tables, and the removal of abandoned boats and garbage. Additionally, there is a desire for facilities such as toilets at Island View to be open year-round.

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone for taking the time to share your experiences and insights with us! These responses will provide guidance in developing Central Saanich's Parks and Trails Master Plan. More opportunities to engage on the draft Parks and Trails Master Plan will be coming up in spring 2024.

To stay informed, please visit letstalkcentralsaanich.ca/parksandtrails.

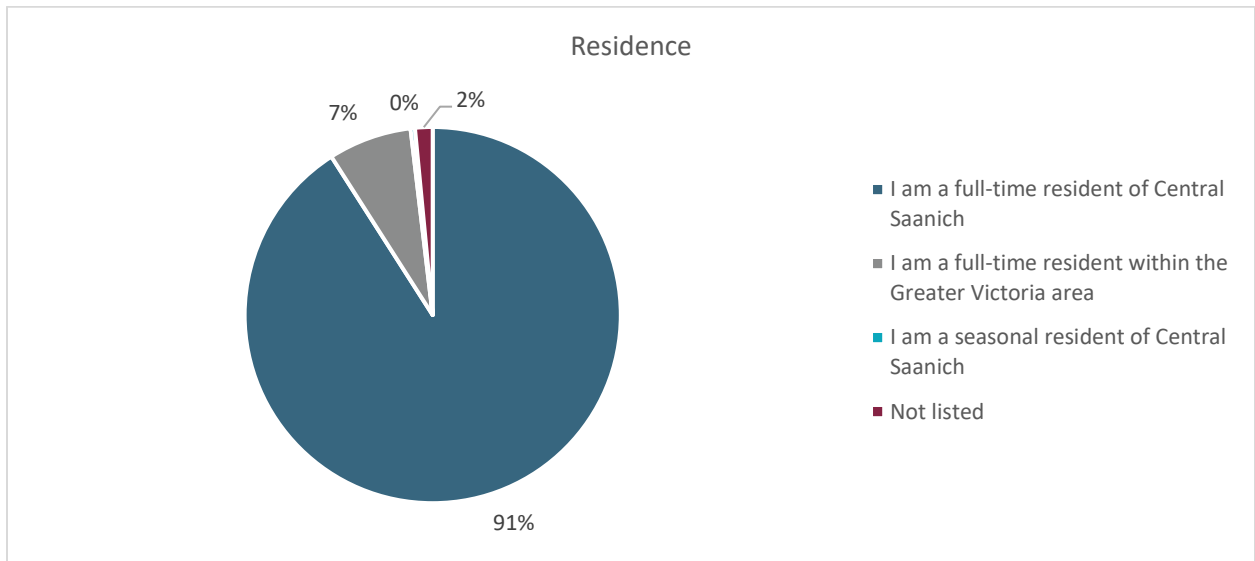


Appendix 1

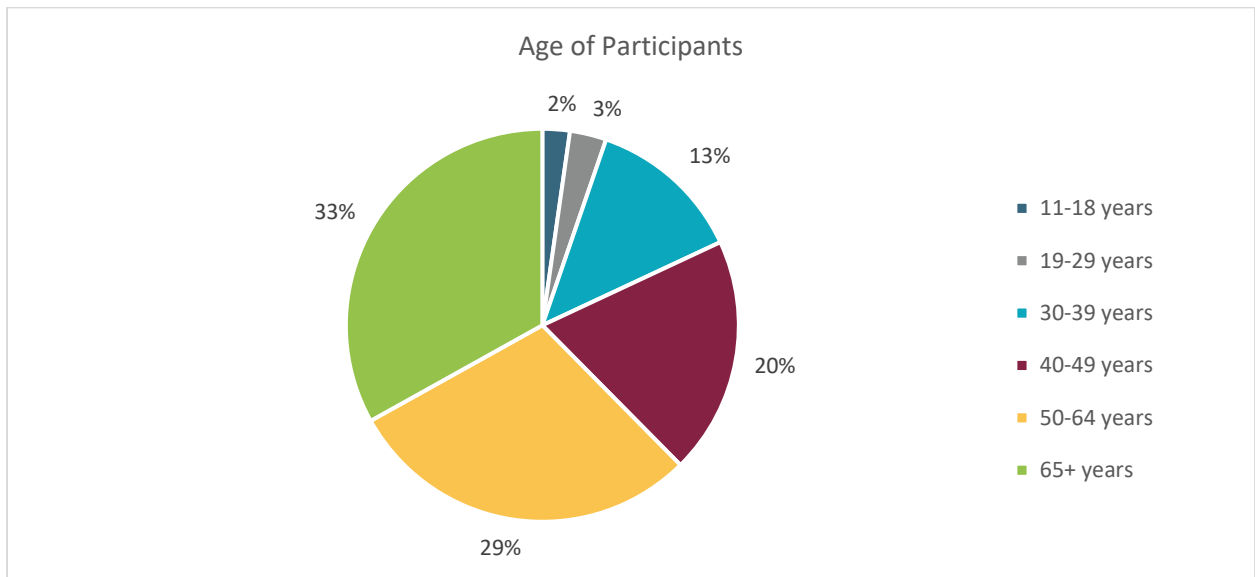
Who We Heard From

To date, we have heard from approximately 980 people through the first round of engagement for the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

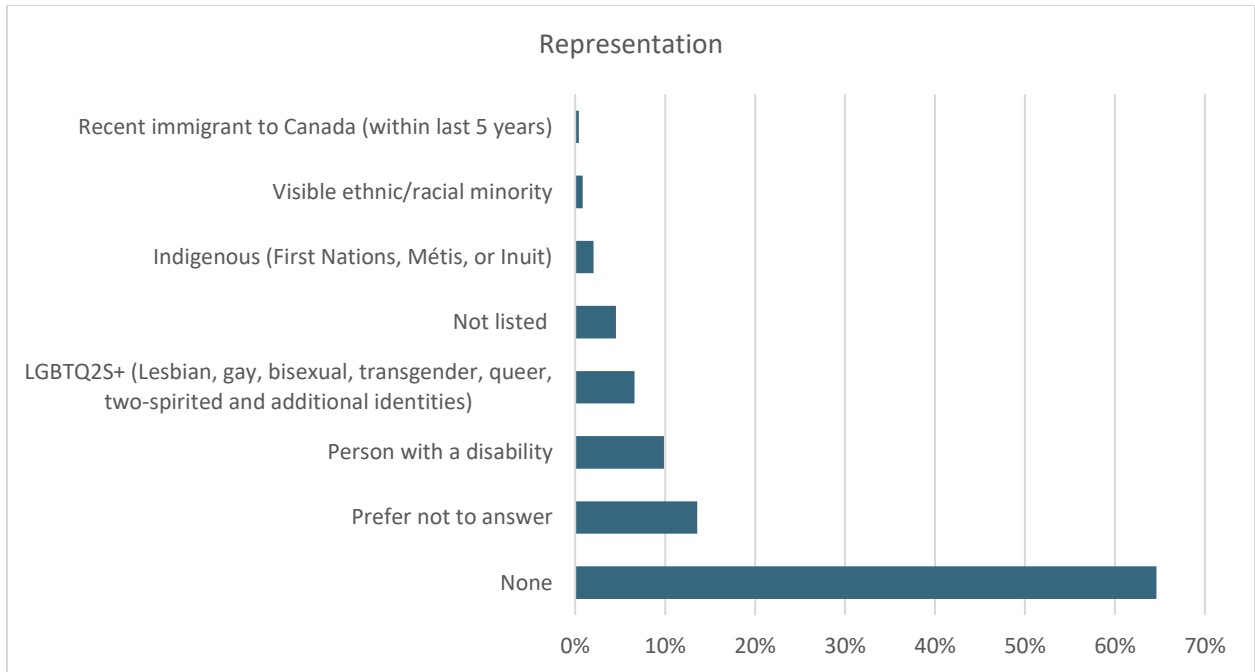
Of the 267 people who completed the survey, we have heard from the following demographics:



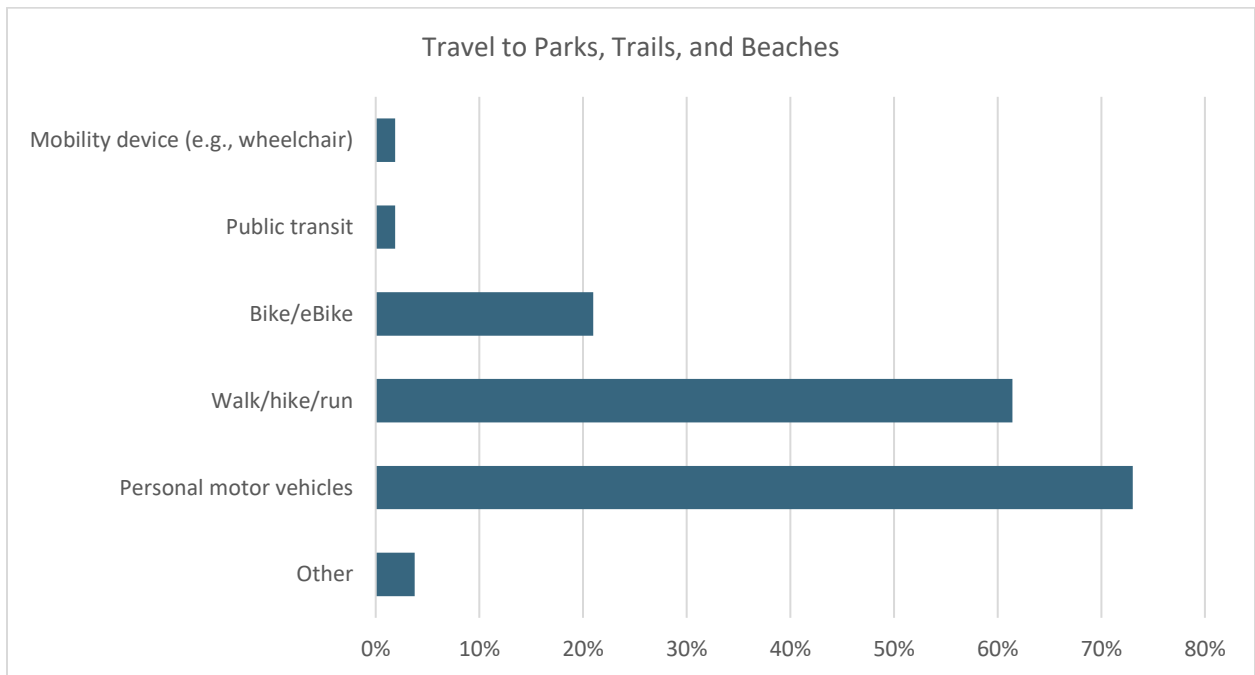
265 responses



266 responses



243 Responses



435 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

A photograph of a forest path. The path is made of dark soil and is lined with a rustic fence made of stacked logs. The trees are tall and thin, with moss growing on their trunks. The ground is covered with fallen leaves.

CENTRAL SAANICH PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

Background Plan Guidance

March 27, 2024

3388A Tennyson Avenue

Victoria, BC V8Z 3P6
p. 250.412.2891
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The District has numerous parks, trails and shoreline access points that provide residents and visitors places to walk/hike, play, gather and/or enjoy the natural beauty and agricultural vistas. Many of these are currently underdeveloped or underutilized and could be enhanced to better meet community needs.

The District’s Comprehensive Parks and Open Space Master Plan was prepared in 1996 and a Beach Access Report was completed in 2001 that, while outdated, do provide guidance for the District in the management of its parks, trails and shoreline accesses. In recent years, the District has adopted a new Official Community Plan (2023), Active Transportation Plan (2021), and the Saanichton Village Design Plan (2020).

A new Parks and Trails Master Plan will help guide staff and Council in making well-informed, efficient and cost-effective decisions for parks, trails and shoreline accesses over a 10-to-20-year period.

While important to the overall fabric of open spaces, trails and shoreline accesses within the District of Central Saanich, regional and provincial parks and other properties not owned by the District will not be specifically addressed in this plan but will be referenced in relation to the services they provide. Considerations around improved access and/or future partnerships to address desired improvements may be considered in the development of the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

PLAN PROCESS

The Parks and Trails Master Plan will be developed over an 18-month timeline, with anticipated completion in December 2024. The planning process will be collaborative with First Nations, community partners, the public, District staff and Council with multiple rounds of engagement throughout the project.



- Phase 1: Pre-planning work, background reviews, mapping and site reviews, and needs assessment.
- Phase 2: Engagement with First Nations, partners and the public to identify opportunities, issues, proposed vision and goals.
- Phase 3: Draft Master Plan #1; community engagement on Draft #1
- Phase 4: Draft Master Plan #2 and Draft Implementation Plan; community engagement; Final Master Plan.

2.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The District of Central Saanich is located within the traditional territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, represented today by W̱JÓŁĒLP (Tsartlip), S̱ÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), W̱SIKEM (Tseycum), BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), and MÁLEXEL (Malahat) First Nations. Other Coast Salish peoples also have important ties to the District, through relationships to this land and the people who have lived on this land since time immemorial.

Central Saanich is a friendly and active community in a spectacular outdoor setting on the Saanich Peninsula, in the Capital Regional District. The rolling farmland, forests, and neighbourhoods are set against the backdrop of breathtaking ocean and mountain views.

Central Saanich has strong agricultural roots that shaped the District's settlement pattern and has been engrained by the introduction of the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and adoption of an Urban Containment Boundary as a principal growth management policy. Encompassing 41.2 square kilometers (excluding First Nations lands), lands within the District are predominantly rural – 60% of land is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) with only 18% within the Urban Containment Boundary. Within the Urban Containment Boundary, there are two village centers (Brentwood Bay and Saanichton) and one commercial area (Keating Business District). The District has marine shorelines on both its west and east sides.

HISTORY

The W̱SÁNEĆ people have had relationships with the lands of the Saanich Peninsula since time immemorial. Saanich elders have passed down the story of a great flood, believed to have taken place about 10,000 years ago. In W̱SÁNEĆ oral history, XÁLS (the Creator) signals a great flood which correlates with a flood event known to Western geological history. The people heeded XÁLS' warnings and got in their boats with food and supplies. As the water levels rose, they anchored their canoes to arbutus trees located atop a mountain that was eventually submerged. As the water levels dropped, the top of Mount Newton emerged, and there they found refuge. Many survived the great flood due to this LÁU, WELNEW (place of refuge) and from then on, they called themselves the W̱SÁNEĆ (the emerging people).

Following the establishment of Fort Victoria in 1843, the first Europeans started to settle in areas away from the fort. In 1851, the lands of Vancouver Island were granted to the Hudson Bay Company for settlement as a crown colony. In 1852, the Crown entered the North and South Saanich Douglas Treaties with the W̱SÁNEĆ people. While the written text of the treaty documents the transfer of land, the preservation of W̱SÁNEĆ village sites and enclosed fields, and the protection of W̱SÁNEĆ people's right to fish and hunt, W̱SÁNEĆ oral history describes it differently. The desire to meet to negotiate a treaty came as a result of history disputes between W̱SÁNEĆ peoples and Douglas and Fort Victoria. By W̱SÁNEĆ oral history, at the meeting Douglas acknowledged the extent of the W̱SÁNEĆ homelands and recognized W̱SÁNEĆ rights and responsibilities to the land, and the parties agreed that the W̱SÁNEĆ and settlers would live on these lands in a peaceful relationship with one another, not that the W̱SÁNEĆ people sold their land.

Only 10 years after the signing of the Douglas Treaty, colonist settlers who arrived by ship to Victoria brought along with them the destructive smallpox infection. Estimates have shown over 30,000 Indigenous people died the following year, representing approximately 60 per cent of their population at the time. Paired with the residential school system and the ban on the potlatch, Indigenous communities were rendered devastated and depopulated.

Starting around 1855, settlers started establishing homesteads and farms in the Mount Newton Valley. The original Prairie Tavern, in Saanichton, was built in 1859 and was later replaced by the Prairie Inn in 1893.

The Victoria and Sidney Railway (V&S) ran through Saanichton on its run from Victoria to Sidney, from 1894 to 1919.

The District of Central Saanich was incorporated in December 1950 when it separated from the Municipality of Saanich. In 1956, a Zoning Bylaw was introduced to regulate land use. SÁÁUTW_ (Tsawout) and WJÓŁŁP (Tsartlip) First Nations are part of the Corporation of the District of Central Saanich Letters Patent, the document giving legal status to the municipality, a unique inclusion within British Columbia and Canada.

The Agricultural Land Reserve was established in 1973 to protect agricultural lands within British Columbia and helps create the distinct settlement boundaries within the District. The District's first OCP was adopted in 1979 and every OCP since that time has focused on protecting agricultural areas and rural character; supporting compact communities with pedestrian-oriented settlement; protecting the District's marine shorelines, inland wetlands, creeks and streams, and wildlife habitat; and the importance of making land use decisions based on the natural features and capabilities of the land.¹

HERITAGE SITES

There are number of buildings and sites on the heritage inventory including a number of designated heritage buildings within the municipal parks system including the following:

- Butterfield House, Barn & Garage/shed. 8000 Thomson Place. Located in Butterfield Park.
- Temperance Hall (Lions Hall). Adjacent to Michell Park and is owned by the District.
- Saanich Pioneer Museum. 7910 East Saanich Rd. Located in Saanichton Green Park
- Newman Farms. 8073 Veyaness Road. Includes house, several buildings including creamery, barn, garage/workshop and boathouses. Newman Park
- West Saanich School, 7130 West Saanich Rd. Located in HEL,HILEŹ (Pioneer Park).

While there are a number of other private sites on the heritage inventory, some of the properties that have some level of public accessibility or are adjacent to park land include:

- St. Stephen's Anglican Church and cemetery. 7921 St Stephen's Road, Designated heritage building. The adjacent house at 1049 Mount Newton Cross Road is also on the heritage registry.
- Shady Creek Church and cemetery. 7180 East Saanich Road. In process of being designated. Cemetery abuts Cooperidge Park.
- Our Lady of Assumption Church. 7748 West Saanich Road. Abuts Hagan Bight-KENNES Viewpoint.
- Butchart Gardens. 800 Benvenuto Drive. National Historic Site.

The District has a heritage walking tour brochure for Mount Newton Cross Road with a number of designated and non-designated sites included. The 2021 Active Transportation Plan identifies Mount New Cross Road as a Proposed Heritage Road.

¹ Information from this section is taken from the District of Central Saanich website, Central Saanich History. <https://www.centralsaanich.ca/our-community/history-heritage-sites>

3.0 DEMOGRAPHICS

The population growth in Central Saanich has generally been close to 1% per year. With a population of 17,385 (2021 census) and limited land base, the District wants to ensure the parks and trails systems continue to serve the needs of the community.

AGE CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 1 shows the change in time of Central Saanich age characteristics from the 2011, 2016 and 2021 Census. Some generalizations that can be seen include that the percentage of young children (aged 0 to 4 years and 5-9 years) has been growing as has the number of adults aged 30 to 39 and 70 to 69.

Figure 2 compares the age percentages of Central Saanich with regional and provincial data. In general, Central Saanich has higher percentages of young children and teens than the Capital Regional District as a whole, with percentages similar to the provincial dataset. Central Saanich also has higher percentages of older adults (ages 60 to 69 and 70 to 79) then both the CRD and the province.

While the average age of Central Saanich at 46.7, is slightly older than the BC average of 43.1, almost half of the population are adults between the ages of 25 to 64 years old (see Figure 3). Just under a quarter (23.5%) of the population are children, teens and young adults (ages 24 and under). The remaining 27.1% are older adults and seniors (ages 65 and over).

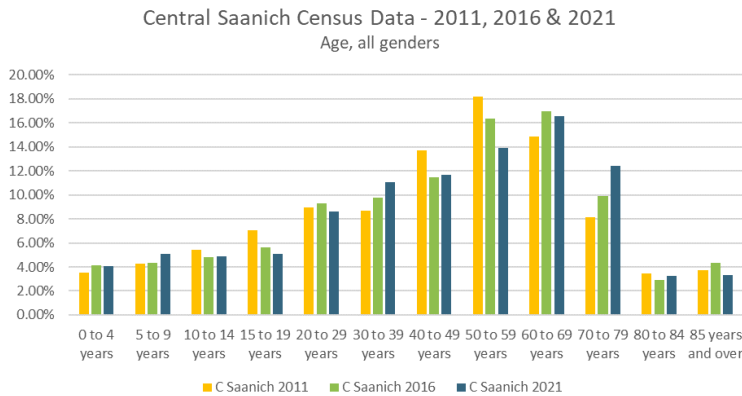


Figure 1. Central Saanich Age of Population - 2011, 2016 and 2021 Census

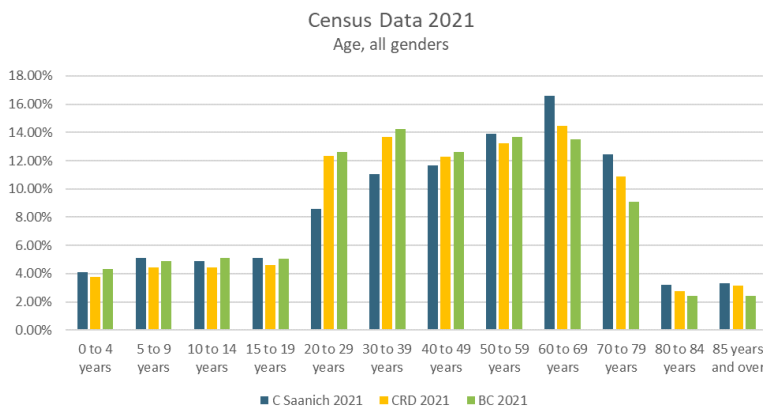


Figure 2. Age of Population - 2021 Census

Central Saanich Census Data 2021
Age, all genders

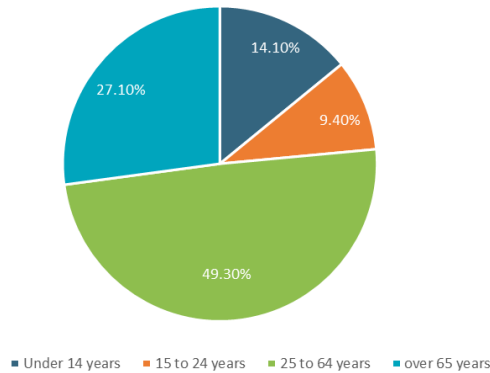


Figure 3. Central Saanich Age Distribution - 2021 Census

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

The average household size in Central Saanich is 2.4 persons, which is higher than the CRD as a whole (2.2 persons) but on par with the provincial data set. In comparison to the CRD, there are fewer people living alone and more multi-person households within Central Saanich. 35.2% of households consist of greater than three people (Figure 4).

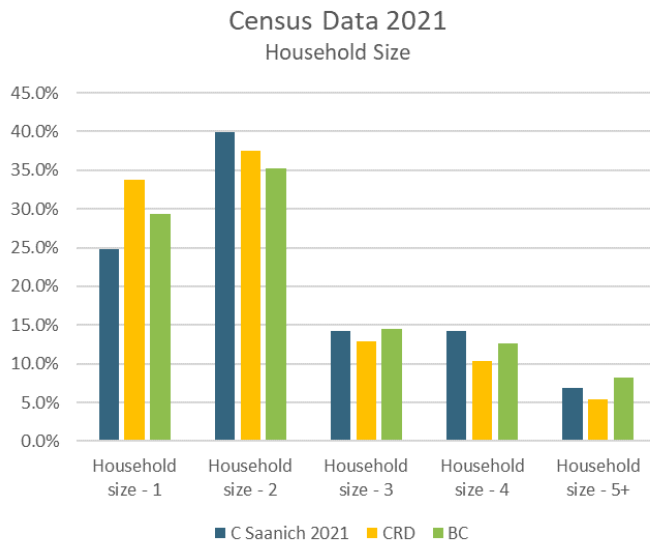


Figure 4. Household Size Comparison - 2021 Census

FORM OF DWELLING

Form of dwelling provides an indicator of the importance of public parks and open spaces. In areas with more apartments and other multi-family dwellings, typically there is more reliance on parks and open spaces to provide access for both active and passive park uses.

The 2021 Census indicated that dwellings in Central Saanich are predominantly comprised of single family residential (53.8%), with 34.2% comprised of duplexes and townhomes and 11.1% of multi-family apartment buildings. (Figure 5)

As outlined with the Official Community Plan, within the Urban Containment Boundary there are two distinct village centers found in Saanichton and Brentwood Bay that provide a range of retail services and include a strong residential component. A third commercial area is the Keating Business District, which is a light industrial and service commercial area servicing the broader region. Growth is anticipated to be through infill and densification within the Urban Containment Boundary within the following areas:

- Village centers of Brentwood Bay and Saanichton – mixed use development at higher densities.
- Along main travel corridors (e.g. Wallace Drive, East Saanich Road, West Saanich Road, and Verdier Avenue), smaller multi-unit developments up to 8 units and moderate and high-density housing forms, including townhomes and apartments up to four storeys where appropriate for the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Dignan Road between West Saanich Road and Stelly’s Cross Road – transition from single-detached residential to higher density, multi-unit residential or commercial/mixed use.
- Intersection of Keating Cross Road and West Saanich, in conjunction with tourist-oriented uses.

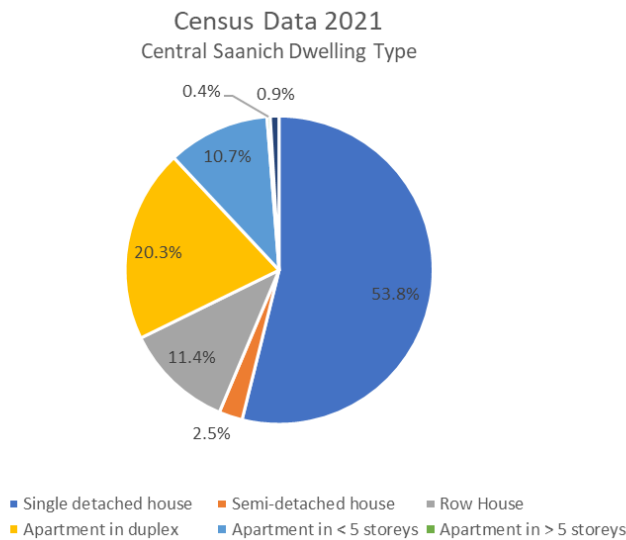


Figure 5. Dwelling Type - 2021 Census

Given the District’s future housing needs and its focus on densifying and infilling existing residential areas, it is expected that over time the number of multi-family housing units will increase. This trend can start to be seen when looking at Census data from 2011, 2016 and 2021 (Figure 6) but will likely increase at a greater rate with the updated provincial legislation in Bill 44. As the changes have been recently rolled out and detailed assessments of what this may mean for Central Saanich have not yet been fully assessed, for the purposes of conducting a needs assessment for the parks and trails master plan, we have estimated that densities will double in the village nodes – Brentwood, Saanichton and Tanner Ridge.

Central Saanich Census Data - 2011, 2016 & 2021
Multi-Family Forms of Dwelling

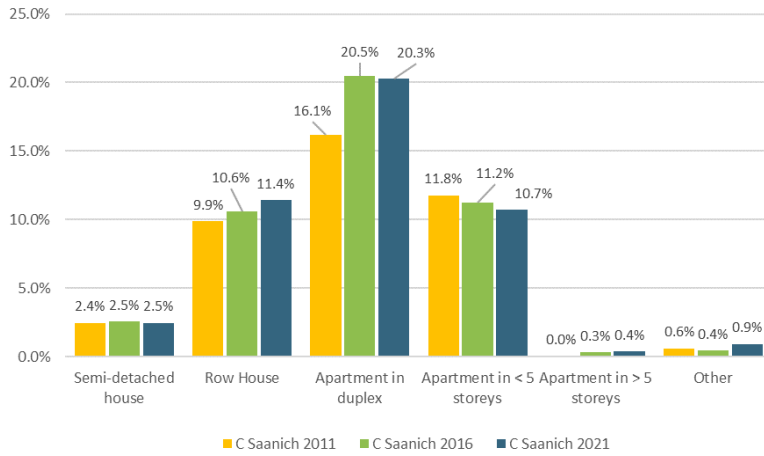


Figure 6. Multi-family Forms of Dwelling - 2011, 2016 and 2021 Census

Understanding the demographics of the community and areas of anticipated growth will help inform a needs assessment that indicates priority areas for future parkland acquisition or specific park amenities to help meet the changing needs of the community over the plan period.

4.0 STRATEGIC POLICIES

Existing policies and plans provide important background information and policy guidance for the development of the Parks and Trails Master Plan. The following pages provide a high-level review of existing policies, plans and other reports related to parks, trails and shoreline accesses within the District.

REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

Central Saanich is one of 13 municipalities within the Capital Regional District (CRD). These local governments and the CRD developed the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) in partnership. The current RGS, adopted in 2018, outlines the following vision for the region:

In 2038, Capital Regional District residents enjoy a healthy and rewarding quality of life. We have a vital economy, livable communities and steward our environment and natural resources with care. Our choices reflect our commitment to collective action on climate change.

Objectives within the RGS relevant to park and trail planning include to protect, conserve and manage ecosystem health; create safe and complete communities; improve multi-modal connectivity and mobility; and, to significantly reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The Official Community Plan (OCP) represents the long-term vision for the community, setting out objectives and policies that guide decisions on planning, land use, and the provision of municipal services. The current OCP was approved in April 2023 following three years of plan preparation including considerable community input.

While guidance for the Parks and Trails Master Plan can be found throughout the Official Community Plan, the community vision, and the objectives and policies within Section 4.5: Parks and Open Spaces provide the most direct guidance.

Community Vision:

Central Saanich is a community where residents value our great natural beauty and rolling rural landscapes, with active agriculture that existing in harmony with vibrant, compact villages. Located within a growing metropolitan region, Central Saanich has maintained its rural and small-town character with a strong sense of community pride and neighbourly residents that welcome diversity.

The District is a leader in climate action and peninsula-wide collaboration with W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, other municipalities, businesses and community organizations to minimize negative impacts on the environment, our waterways, and marine shorelines.

The built environment supports a healthy community that is active, vibrant, and inclusive, with a road, trail and open space network that is safe and prioritizes active transportation. A diverse housing stock located within walking distance to services and public transit supports residents of a range of ages, incomes, and abilities to age-in-place and thrive within the community.

We have established strong, respectful working relationships with W̱SÁNEĆ Nations. The economy is thriving with a variety of local businesses supported by the community.

Section 4.5 Parks and Open Space Objectives

- Supporting an active, healthy community by providing a variety of parks and trails that are safe and accessible for all ages and abilities.

- Working with adjacent jurisdictions, the CRD and BC Parks to create linkages between parks and open spaces that connect to regional amenities and form corridors for multi-modal active transportation.
- Collaborating with W̱SÁNEĆ Nations to identify, protect and restore ecologically and culturally sensitive areas.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity, habitat and environmentally sensitive areas, particularly related to the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem.
- Continuing to expand and develop the parks and trails system to serve the existing and future needs of the community in an environmentally sensitive manner that protects a diversity of species and ecosystems.
- Recognizing the role of natural areas in climate resiliency and considering climate action in park planning, design and operations by applying landscaping strategies that decrease water use, enhance habitat and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improving the quality and quantity of public shoreline access and supporting non-motorized recreational opportunities in key waterfront locations.

Other OCP Related Guidance

Within other sections of the OCP, there are a number of objectives and policies that will help provide guidance for the PTMP. Objectives include:

- Preserving Saanich Peninsula’s Interconnected ecology through collaboration with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, North Saanich and Sidney. (Section 4.6)
- Encouraging and facilitating the protection and conservation of the natural environment and biodiversity for the benefit of present and future generations and recognize protecting the District’s natural assets contributes to climate change mitigation and resiliency. (Section 4.6)
- Preserving, protecting, and enhancing freshwater and marine ecosystems by protecting the quantity and quality of the waters, supporting watershed restoration projects, restoring riparian areas and the marine shoreline to natural conditions (Section 4.6).
- Apply a climate lens to all local government decision-making to integrate greenhouse gas mitigation efforts and adaptation considerations across all municipal programs, projects and services. (Section 4.7)
- Preserve and celebrate the diverse heritage and historical features of Central Saanich, including the W̱SÁNEĆ cultures that have existed since time immemorial. (Section 4.8)
- Create a community and local culture that supports walking, cycling and other forms of active transportation as preferred travel modes with a target of 50% of all trips occurring by active transportation by 2050. (Section 4.9)
- Better utilize the existing road and trail networks by improving connectivity between the Village Centres and Keating Business District, and to other locations throughout the District. (Section 4.9)
- Where an informal trail or pathway crosses over private land, work with property owners to formalize rights-of-way for public passage where they connect to the active transportation network. (Section 4.9)

In earlier drafts of the OCP, some of the policies had longer bulleted sub-lists that while removed from the final version were intended to be carried forward to future projects. This includes the following.

1. Develop a Parks Master Plan to guide the acquisition and management of Parks and Trails within the municipality, including the following:

-
- a. Identify a hierarchy of park and trail classifications that would accommodate a diversity of passive and active recreational opportunities balanced with environmental protection and enhancement based on park classification;
 - b. Ensure the unique features of parks are captured within a park hierarchy;
 - c. Update and incorporate the Beach Access Report into the Parks Master Plan and identify areas suitable for new public access to the shoreline;
 - d. Identify an ideal network of connected parks, trails and open spaces, that would provide wildlife corridors and active transportation connectivity;
 - e. Take advantage of existing road rights-of-way to develop connecting trails or linear park corridors to improve overall connectivity within the parks and trails network;
 - f. Refine the proposed future trail network and identify specific opportunities for trail connections in addition to those identified in the Active Transportation Plan;
 - g. Identify areas for further development of the equestrian trail network, including within public rights-of-way where it is deemed safe and appropriate;
 - h. Considers peninsula connectivity to broader trail networks that include adjacent jurisdictions and regional amenities, such as the Panorama Recreation Centre;
 - i. Explore opportunities to provide off-lease areas for dogs to minimize conflict;
 - j. Identify park acquisition priorities that balance recreational needs with protection of the natural environment;
 - k. Identify targets and schedules for park, trail, and facilities upgrades over time, with estimated municipal expenditures; and
 - l. Accounts for sufficient time for park maintenance and recovery periods to lessen impacts to playing fields, trails, playgrounds or other heavily used areas.

2024 – 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan was informed by community feedback, including the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, and identifies the priorities and goals for 2024-2027. The five priorities include:

- Invest in infrastructure and active transportation.
- Expand the supply of affordable, attainable and rental housing.
- Foster a community of inclusion, diversity and accessibility.
- Cultivate a resilient economy and thriving agricultural sector.
- Champion climate adaptation, mitigation and preparedness.
- Demonstrate organizational effectiveness.

LAND USE BYLAW

The Land Use Bylaw establishes different zones for agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial areas and outlines how land may be used or developed.

Most parks within the District are zoned as P-2 (Parks and Open Space), however there are some zoned as A-1 (Agriculture), P-1 (General Institutional), or R-1 (Large Lot Single Family Residential).

Permitted uses within P-2 include parks, pathways, natural open space, hiking trails, playgrounds, fairground and exhibition ground.

2023 PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION UPDATES

In the fall of 2023, the Province announced a suite of housing legislation, aimed to deliver more homes throughout the province on a faster timeline. For the District of Central Saanich, the changes to Bill 44 – Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act and Bill 46 – Housing Statutes (Development Financing) Amendment Act have implications on density and population projections as well as on mechanisms to acquire additional parkland and/or fund park and trail improvements.

In suburban and urban communities, the new legislation requires multiple units of housing (3 to 6 units depending on the location and context) to be permitted on single-family and duplex zoned lots. To speed up the building of homes for people and to support pro-active planning, one-off, site-by-site public hearings for rezonings have been phased out for housing projects that are consistent with OCPs (which already have a public hearing).

Under the legislation, Local governments are now required to update their Official Community Plans (OCPs) and zoning bylaws on a regular basis (every 5 years) for consistency with housing needs reports. Over time, this will have the effect of reducing the number of site-specific rezoning applications required to bring into effect land use changes that are consistent with community visions articulated through OCPs. This will impact parkland dedication and community amenity contributions as these are often achieved through rezonings. Bill 46 includes new legislation for Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) bylaws such that they can be paid when the approval or building permit is issued.

5.0 OTHER KEY BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Other documents that were reviewed and that will provide guidance in the development of the Parks and Trails Master Plan include the following documents.

CENTRAL SAANICH ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (2023)

The Accessibility Plan outlines the District’s commitments to accessibility over the next three years (2023-2026) as well as future considerations. This is not a comprehensive list for achieving full accessibility – that is an ongoing process – but they will contribute to the goals of the plan. As part of consultation on the preparation of the plan, and for ongoing input, the District of Central Saanich, District of North Saanich, Town of Sidney and the Central Saanich Police Service formed the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC) to consult on matters of accessibility across the municipalities.

Considerations outlined in the Accessibility Plan, related to the Parks and Trails Master Plan include prioritizing accessibility in planning upgrades to transportation, buildings, infrastructure and public spaces by addressing known barriers and increasing safety for vulnerable users. Other items include ensuring signage integrates accessibility features such as plain language, easy-to-read fonts, visual cues and tactile signage; identifying and implementing opportunities to increase the number of public and accessible washrooms; increasing the availability of public seating that accommodates a range of body types and disabilities in a location that does not create new barriers.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN (2023)

The Age-Friendly Plan was adopted in October 2023. The plan will help the District understand how to best create age-friendly services and infrastructure to support the growing number of seniors in the community. An age-friendly community is where all members of the community are supported, active, and engaged throughout all stages of life.

During development of the plan, engagement participants indicated that they appreciated access to parks and walkable trails and that they would like to see additional gathering spaces for socialization and intergenerational activities. There were comments about more paths to connect communities and park areas, more washrooms, more off-leash parks and outdoor seating. Additional ideas for improvement included more pickleball courts and a universal access system on one of the local docks or beaches for older or disabled kayakers who need assistance launching.

Actions in the plan related to the Parks and Trails Master Plan include:

- Incorporating the needs of a diverse and aging population through accessibility, intergenerational opportunities and gathering spaces to support social connections.
- Engaging older adults during development of the Parks and Trails Master Plan.
- Continuing to evaluate and improve safety and accessibility throughout the District for people who walk, roll, cycle, take transit and the equestrian community.

CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEY (2023)

Every four years, the District conducts a Citizen Satisfaction Survey to give residents the chance to voice their opinions about the quality of life, which services are most important, and any areas that could use improvement. This information is used during Council’s strategic planning sessions, as well as by staff in

service planning, budgeting, training design and operational improvements. Key findings from the 2023 survey related to the PTMP include:

- 97% of respondents reported that the overall quality of life in the District was good or very good.
- 85% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of services from the District.
- 96% were satisfied with access to parks and public spaces.
- 73% of respondents preferred to maintain current parks and park amenity services levels through minor increases to tax levels.
- The top three amenities to be considered by the District to improve local parks included activities and structures (i.e. playground, splash pads, skate parks, etc); dog parks and dog waste containers; and washroom facilities. Other amenities mentioned included additional trails/trail maintenance, waste containers, accessibility, invasive species removal, additional seating including tables and covered areas, parking, safety and lighting.

PANORAMA RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN (2022-2026)

Panorama Recreation operates two facilities (Panorama Recreation Centre and Greenglade Community Centre, both outside of Central Saanich) and offers programming within the District at Central Saanich Cultural Centre. Important community characteristics and potential indicators of recreation need over the next five years noted in the plan included:

- The median age of residents on the Peninsula is older than the provincial average.
- Current service provision levels for arena and pools are generally well-aligned with those in urban areas across BC.
- Spatial analysis shows that approximately half of residents on the Peninsula are located within a 10-minute drive of an indoor recreation facility. Those residents that do not live within this catchment radius may perceive a recreation service level gap.

Actions identified in the strategic plan that may be relevant to the preparation of the PTMP include:

- Explore cost effective opportunities to meet indoor community space needs and identified gaps in Central Saanich (see Central Saanich Recreation Needs Assessment).
- Consider the feasibility of developing a multi-sport facility in Central Saanich (for awareness throughout PTMP prep, but generally outside the scope of the plan).
- Work with municipal partners to explore outdoor leisure aquatics amenity opportunities like a splash pad / spray park.
- Ensure equity, inclusion and access are primary considerations across all areas of programming and service delivery.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2021)

Vision: The Central Saanich Active Transportation Plan will enable people of all ages and abilities to walk and cycle throughout the community, while respecting our unique character and heritage.

The plan outlines strategic improvements to road crossings, sidewalks, pathways and supporting facilities (i.e. bike racks, e-bike charging, etc.) to enhance connectivity for walking and biking throughout the District.

- Connectivity improvements related to the PTMP, there are several linkages for multi-use pathways within road right-of-way noted as well as a pathway fronting Centennial Park along Wallace Drive.
- Parks with access to electricity should be outfitted with a dedicated e-bike charging area.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP PLAN (2021)

The District of Central Saanich has set a goal of 100% less GHG emissions by 2050, relative to 2007, with an interim target of 45% less GHG emissions by 2030, relative to 2007. The primary sources of community-scale GHG emissions are transportation, buildings and solid waste. To reach targets for reducing transportation emissions, the community needs to make significant shifts to active transportation and/or zero or low emission vehicles. To reach targets for reducing building emissions, new buildings are to seek to achieve net-zero energy and existing buildings are to be retrofit to reduce energy use. The District has been tracking and reporting emissions from municipal operations since 2009 and has been carbon neutral in its operations since 2015.

Specific to the Parks and Trails Plan, actions to help achieve the goals include:

- Creating compact and complete communities by continuing to focus development in the Urban Settlement areas with the goal of increasing the number of homes within 400 meters to parks.
- Creating the Active Transportation Plan. While this plan is separate from the Parks and Trails plan, the networks within the two documents should align.
- Identifying opportunities to protect and increase tree canopy and other natural assets that contribute to carbon sequestration, to consider climate sequestration in all land acquisition and management activities.
- Preparing for potential changes to climate by understanding how sensitive natural assets are to the range of potential projected climate changes.
- Participating in regional efforts to identify the value of natural assets in climate change adaptation (e.g reducing flood inundation, protecting shorelines from erosion, providing shade during extreme heat events) and incorporating into park and land management decisions.

A BIOREGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE SAANICH PENINSULA (2021)

This document outlines a collaborative approach to recognize the rich and interconnected ecology of the Saanich Peninsula Bioregion and to foster a health and sustaining environment for the future. Development of the framework and the formation of the Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition, authors of the framework, came out of the Sidney Summit on Habitat and Environment (2018). The plan outlines three principles with central and sub- outcomes for each:

- Ecological Integrity: Conserve, protect and maintain ecosystems and the connectivity of the natural environment with an approach that is proactive and informed by both W̱SÁNEĆ traditional ecological and comprehensive scientific knowledge.
- Jurisdictional Collaboration: Operate collaboratively and cooperatively to support sustainable practices on the Saanich Peninsula
- Community Perspective: public knowledge and stewardship of the natural environment supports ecological sustainability.

SAANICHTON VILLAGE DESIGN PLAN (2020)

This plan identified a 30-year vision for Saanichton Village, creating a framework for a vibrant, compact, walkable and mixed-use village. Key directions within the plan related to the PTMP:

- The District will pursue opportunities for park and open space acquisition through the development application process. Priority areas include a central place area within “the triangle”, and plaza and/or pedestrian connections at the municipal hall and Thrifty Foods sites.

-
- Blue-Green Strategy for Saanichton Village promoting an integrated approach to stormwater management, urban forest management and other ecologically oriented objectives.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (2019)

The plan provides the District a framework to review and assess areas of identified high fire risk and to guide the improvement and or/development of emergency plans, evacuation plans, communication and education programs, bylaw development in areas of fire risk, and the management of potentially hazardous forest lands adjacent to the community. It outlines 36 strategic recommendations for public and private lands to reduce wildfire threat. Recommendations related to parks and trails and trail plan include:

- Including wildfire considerations in the planning and acquisition strategy for parks and recreation areas.
- Developing policies and practices for design and maintenance of FireSmart publicly owned land such as community parks and open spaces.

CENTRAL SAANICH RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2019)

This study was prepared by Panorama Recreation with the goals of reviewing the current state of recreational programming in the District, identifying specific short-term and long-term needs for programs and services, and identifying the facilities and amenities to meet community needs.

Comments from the participants in the study related to the PTMP include the desire for expanding the number of indoor and outdoor pickleball courts, in particular for year-round use or casual drop-in play; new park amenities including disc golf and bike parks and the provision of e-charging stations.

FACILITY LONG-TERM ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (2015)

The purpose of this document is to measure and monitor anticipated upcoming maintenance and renewal expenses for district-owned buildings. Parks and recreation buildings managed by the district are in three municipal parks: Rom Knott, Verdier and Centennial including concession stands, washroom buildings, ball diamond infrastructure and storage buildings.

INTEGRATED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN (2009)

Central Saanich was the first municipality on Vancouver Island to commission an Integrated Stormwater Management Plan. The plan addressed three major watersheds: KEENES (formerly Hagan-Graham), Tetayut (formerly Sandhill) and McHugh-Noble including 32 km of creek and covering approximately 3900 hectares.

At the time of the report, more than half of the total creek length was classified as “non-functional”. Issues in the watersheds are principally attributed to the extensive direct modification of creeks and wetlands for drainage purposes (such as ditching); the incremental effects of development, creating increased runoff volumes, increased peak flows and reduced groundwater recharge; and water quality impacts from the direct transfer of contaminants from roads and paved areas.

Increasing rainfall capture (the proportion of rainfall that is allowed to infiltrate into the ground as opposed to entering into piped drainage systems) is one of the most important strategies in rainwater management for the District.

BEACH ACCESS REPORT (2001)

The recommendations in the report were intended to form the basis of a five-year plan to further improve public access to the foreshore within the District. In preparing the report, 28 beach access opportunities (11 on east shorelines and 17 on west shoreline) were evaluated. Two of these were evaluated as both beach access and viewpoint development potential. At the time of report preparation, five sites were considered to be complete, twenty were considered feasible for future development and the remaining five were considered not viable.

PARKS MASTER PLAN (1996, 1999)

The Parks Master Plan was approved in 1996. A Parks Master Plan Policy Summary was prepared in 1999 that is a critical review of the 1996 Comprehensive Parks and Open Space Master Plan recommendations. The contents of the 1999 report supersede all recommendations in the 1996 document. The goal outlined in the 1996 Master Plan is to “develop and maintain a quality park system with adequate natural areas and developed recreational amenities to adequately satisfy the diverse recreational needs of all existing and future Central Saanich residents”.

The report also outlines the highest priorities for park and beach access upgrading as well as highest priority areas for parkland acquisition and disposition. Given that the plan was prepared over 25 years ago, priorities for improvements and/or acquisition will be reviewed as part of the master plan preparation.

OTHER BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

While some of these documents are dated, they do provide some context for development of the Parks and Trails Master Plan and some past history on several of the parks within the municipality.

- DCS Signage and Wayfinding Program (2023)
- CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (approved 2023)
- CRD Island View Beach Regional Park Draft Management Plan (DRAFT 2017).
- CRD Regional Trails Management Plan (2016)
- Newman Farm Master Plan (2007)
- Butterfield Park Inventory and Assessment (2002)
- Oak Haven Park Management Plan (1999)
- Review of Brooks Park Development Potential (1992)
- Centennial Park Master Plan (1989)

6.0 BENEFITS AND TRENDS

BENEFITS OF PARKS AND TRAILS

There is a significant body of research that demonstrate the value of parks, trails and open spaces for the central role they play in human, community and ecological health.



Physical and Mental Health

Numerous studies indicate that spending time in nature provides physical, mental and social health benefits.^{2,3,4}

Increasing time in nature can help reduce disease risk, decrease risks of obesity and decrease stress.

Time in nature can help children develop their gross motor skills and studies indicate that time in nature can increase the concentration performance of children with ADHD.^{5,6}

Based on the health benefits that nature spaces provide, there is a growing network of nature prescription programs that provide resources for health-care professionals to prescribe time in nature.⁷



Social Health and Inclusion

Parks and open spaces and the user amenities within them contribute to the identity and spirit of a community and provide places for people to connect.

Studies show that people who connect with nature feel less isolated and form more connections with neighbours, increasing the sense of inclusion and belonging.⁸

Participation in sport, physical activity and/or recreation contribute to perceptions of feeling welcomed and included, feeling networked or connected, contribute to a sense of community pride, and contribute to a sense of trust and reliance in the community.⁹

Access and participation in recreational activities can help reduce crime prevention and can help reduce delinquent behaviour.

² National Recreation and Parks Association. Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat. 2010.

³ <https://www.healthbynature.ca/>

⁴ #Natureforall / Home to Us All: How Connecting with Nature Helps Us Care for Ourselves and the Earth. IUCN / Children & Nature Network. 2018.

⁵ Frances Kuo. Synopsis of 2010 Research Papers: The Key Benefits. American Recreation and Parks Association. 2010

⁶ Pan-Canadian Public Health Network, Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health. Active Outdoor Play Statement. 2018.

⁷ <https://www.parkprescriptions.ca/>

⁸ Frances Kuo. Synopsis of 2010 Research Papers: The Key Benefits. American Recreation and Parks Association. 2010

⁹ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. (2023). Custom analysis, 2023 Social, Health, Economic, and Environmental Impact survey.



Environment

Parks, trails and open spaces provide critical habitat for wildlife, protect and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, and support ecosystem functions such as air and water purification, stormwater management and flood protection.

They provide an opportunity to promote and protect natural heritage and stewardship.

Studies show that the more people experience, connect with, and share their love of nature, in all its diversity, the more support and action there will be for its conservation.¹⁰

With changing climate, parks and open spaces also play a role in building climate resilience through use of nature-based solutions. Trails and green corridors for active transportation help reduce carbon emissions while also improving the mental and heart health of commuters and recreational users.

Economic



Economic benefits of parks and trails are typically seen through tourism revenue, business investment and enhanced property values.¹¹

They provide “natural capital” which are resources and flows of service that provide broad benefits such as carbon sequestration by trees, plants and soil, and water filtration and flood storage by wetlands, some of which services can be more effective and less costly than traditional hard infrastructure.¹²

Use of parks and trails can also have spin-off benefits of reduced health care costs.

TRENDS AFFECTING PARKS AND TRAILS MANAGEMENT

The following is a summary of some of the general trends affecting management and operations of parks, trails and open spaces.

Truth And Reconciliation

Parks, trails and open spaces present opportunities to support truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities through growing an ongoing connection to the land, better integrating traditional ecological knowledge, values and interests, and considering other ways to support and amplify indigenous language, culture and history.

Demographics and Lifestyle

In general, Canada’s population is aging. Many communities have an increasing proportion of older adults and fewer children. As noted in Section 3.0 Demographics, there is an increasing proportion of young children (under age 9) in Central Saanich as well.

Canadians are generally living more sedentary lives with more of their leisure time either enjoying individual pursuits or spent online. The focus on online leisure, particularly in youth is leading to nature

¹⁰ #Natureforall / Home to Us All: How Connecting with Nature Helps Us Care for Ourselves and the Earth. IUCN / Children & Nature Network. 2018.

¹¹ Frances Kuo, Synopsis of 2010 Research Papers: The Key Benefits (Ashburn, Virginia: American Recreation and Parks Association, 2010)

¹² Cheryl Ng Hui Ting / City of Vancouver. Natural Capital Valuation of Vancouver’s Parks. 2020.

deficit disorders. Designing and implementing opportunities to connect children, youth and families with nature are important for the health of both humans and the natural environment.

Active Transportation and Connectivity

There is greater demand for informal and unstructured individual leisure activities, such as walking and cycling, in part due to increasingly busy schedules.

The proportion of people choosing active modes of transportation is growing as an alternative to driving. In addition, larger numbers of people are using trails and cycling infrastructure for recreational use. Providing connections within the community to parks and trails along with associated facilities (such as bike racks, e-bike charging stations, etc.) in parks and along trails will support both commuter and recreational users.

Accessibility / Equity / Inclusion

The *Accessible BC Act* became law in June 2021 and aims to remove all barriers to accessibility for British Columbians with disabilities. Under the new Act, public sector organizations in BC, including local governments must publish an Accessibility Plan, prepared in consultation with an accessibility committee.

Canada's population is increasingly diverse. Parks, trails and other open spaces need to be welcoming and inclusive for all who choose to use them regardless of ethnicity, gender, income, age, ability or identity.

Anti-Social Behaviours / Social Challenges

There are growing challenges in social issues such as access to affordable housing, growing unhoused populations, addictions and mental health. The provincial declared a public health emergency in 2016 related to the growing number of drug-related overdoses and deaths. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified some of these issues. These challenges affect municipal operations staff across the region.

Increasing Land Values / Competition for Land

Increasing land values and new provincial housing legislation means that it is getting harder and/or more expensive for local governments to acquire new parkland.

The growing population places increasing demand for the protection of important natural areas and environmental resources as well as for access to parks and open spaces for recreational opportunities.

Competing / Changing Demands

As the population grows, so does the number of visitors to parks and trails as well as the types of experiences and uses that visitors are looking for in parks and open spaces. There was also increased use patterns noted following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Canadian City Parks Report estimates an approximate 15% increase in park visitation from 2020 to 2022 across Canada¹³.

There is a growing demand for spaces that have something for everyone as well as for single use amenities that take larger footprints in parks (i.e. bike skills parks, dedicated sport courts, etc.). In areas with growing populations and limited access to new parkland, designing multi-functionality into park and trail spaces is becoming increasingly important, however this multi-functionality may also increase conflicts among user groups.

¹³ Surfacing Solutions: The Canadian City Parks Report. Park People. 2023.

Infrastructure Deficits / Resourcing Demands / Sustainable Service Delivery

Aging infrastructure coupled with increased use means that operating and capital budgets are increasing. Parks and trails need to be positioned as an essential service that are as important to the community's well-being as traditional services, such as roads and utilities.

Partnerships with other service providers such as schools, other service providers and/or community groups and volunteers are a key consideration in helping with service delivery.

Data Driven Management

Parks and trails managers have more opportunities to use software, “big-data” and other tools to have real-time data about parks, trails and open spaces to help make informed management decisions. Advanced data analytics tools can provide real-time data, predictive analysis, and user-friendly interfaces, enabling park managers to make data-driven decisions that enhance visitor experiences.

Mobile crowdsource technologies (ex. TrailForks, Strava, AllTrails) along with social media, are making it much easier for the public to find trails and natural spaces. In addition, citizen collection of data can be used to support environmental management (i.e. iNaturalist, eBird).

Environmental Stewardship and Protection

Citizens are becoming more informed of environmental issues and in some cases are putting greater pressure to provide more naturalized park spaces, incorporating green infrastructure and/or using more native or native-adapted plant species.

Volunteer programs such as Saanich's Pulling Together and “Friends of” groups are increasingly important to help with natural areas protection service delivery, particularly with regards to growing issues related to invasive species.

Climate Change

Parks and open spaces play an increasing role in the mitigation of climate change impacts by providing opportunities for green infrastructure and nature-based solutions (i.e. stormwater services, tree canopy coverage, shoreline protection, etc.).

Wetter conditions in winter with longer droughts in summer, coupled with an increase in unpredictable storm events affects park and trail maintenance (ex. increasing risk of erosion, wood debris clean-up from windstorms, damage to park and trail infrastructure, etc.) and park use patterns (ex. longer peak seasons, more use of shoreline access and parks to cool down during heat waves). Some native species, such as western redcedars, are affected by changing weather patterns – parks operations will need to address this during species selection for new plantings both in ornamental horticulture as well as any environmental restoration work.



Central
Saanich

PARKS & TRAILS MASTER PLAN

Parks and Environment Standing Committee – April 4, 2024



Agenda

- Project overview
- Research and analysis
- Community engagement – What we Heard
- Questions for Committee

Intention and Commitment

Central Saanich and its parks, trail and beaches are located on the traditional territories of the WSÁNEĆ peoples.

The District is committed to celebrating and respecting the knowledge and practices of the S̷ÁUTW̷ (Tsawout) and W̷JOLELP (Tsartlip) First Nations.

Our intention and commitment is to work with the WSÁNEĆ peoples to protect the environment and ensure your perspectives, wisdom and wishes are reflected in the District's management of local parks, trails and beaches.



Project Overview

“Parks and Trails Master Plan” includes local:

- Parks
- Trails
- Shoreline accesses

- Where we are now

- Phase 1 – **Project scoping** and research
- Phase 2 – **Listening and Analysis** (Engagement and Ideas)
- Phase 3 – **Drafting** the Master Plan (Spring/Summer 2024)
- Phase 4 – **Finalizing** the Master Plan (Fall/Winter 2024)



BENEFITS OF PARKS & TRAILS

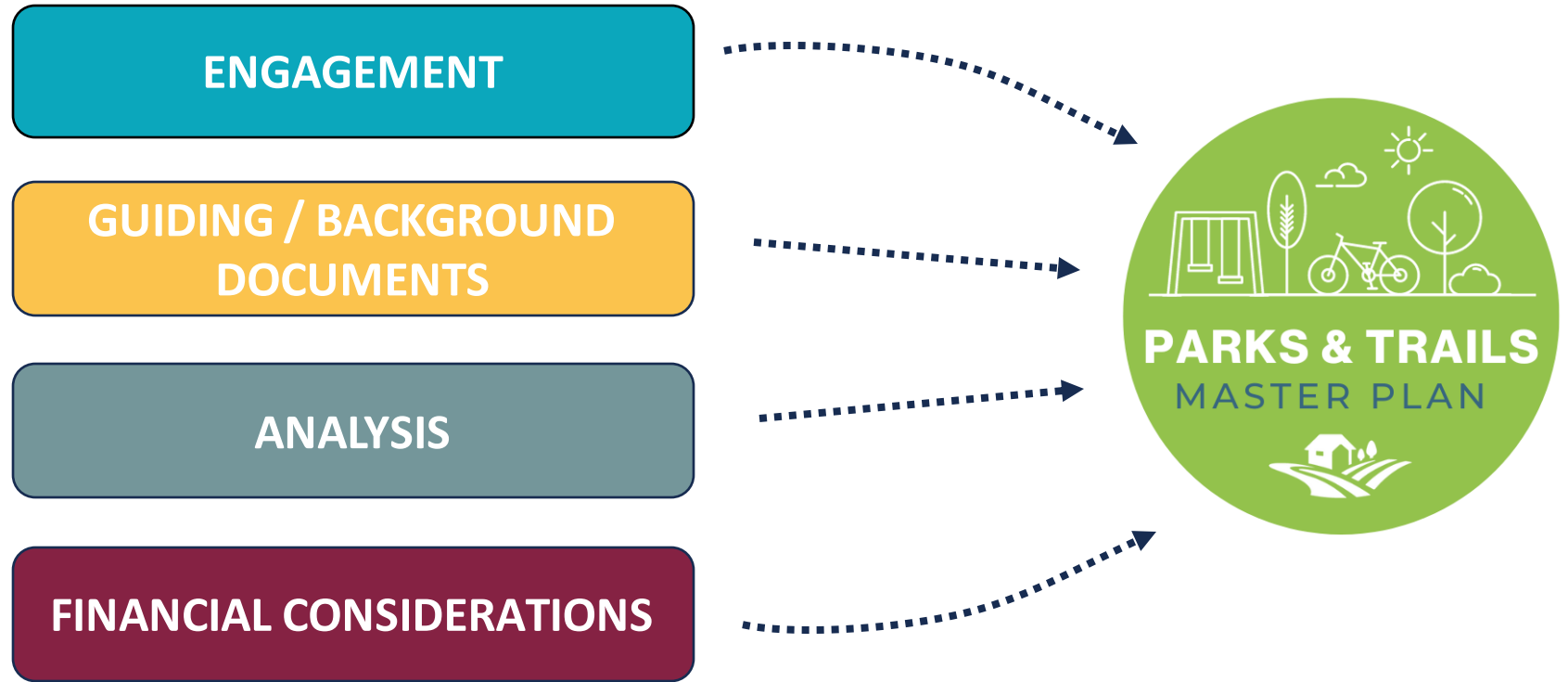
- Physical and mental health
- Social health and inclusion
- Cultural and spiritual
- Environmental protection and stewardship
- Climate resiliency
- Economic





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BUILDING THE MASTER PLAN



GUIDING DOCUMENTS



- 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan
- 2023 Official Community Plan
- 2023 Accessibility Plan
- 2023 Age Friendly Plan
- 2021 Active Transportation Plan
- 2021 Climate Leadership Plan
- 2020 Saanichton Village Design Plan

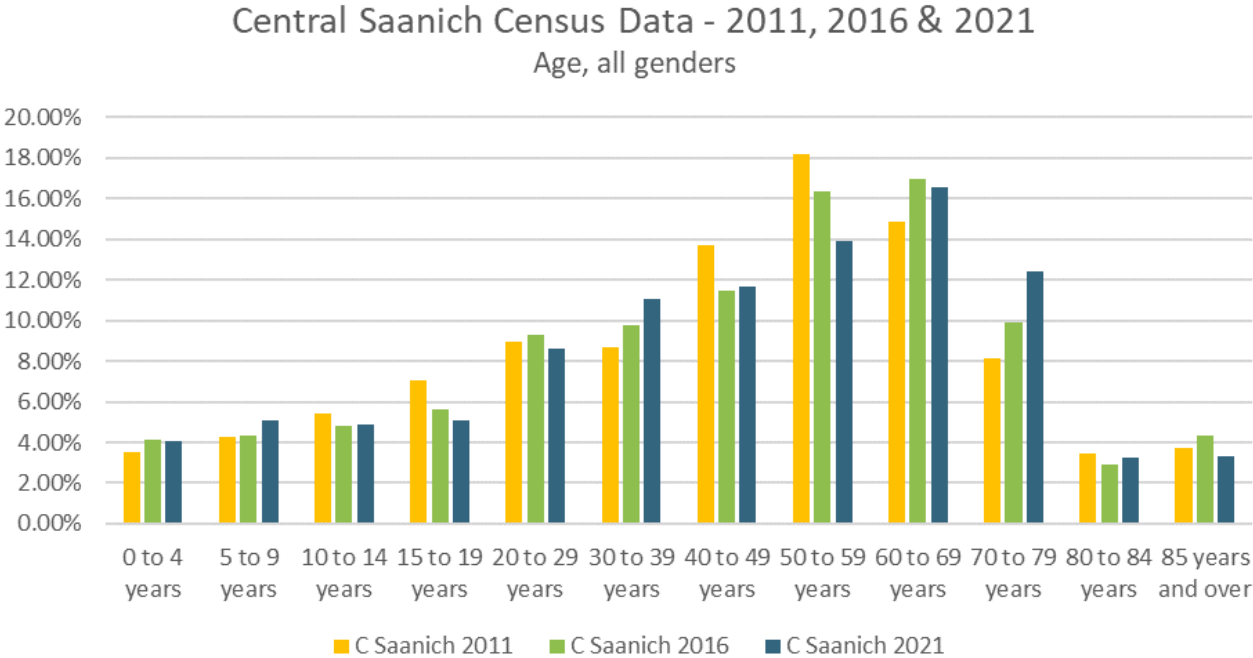
2023 OCP OBJECTIVES

- Supporting an active, healthy community by providing a variety of parks and trails that are safe and accessible for all ages and abilities.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity, habitat and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Collaborating with W̱SÁNEĆ Nation to identify, protect and restore ecologically and culturally sensitive areas.
- Expanding and developing the parks and trails system to serve the existing and future needs of the community.
- Recognizing the role of natural areas in climate resiliency and considering climate action in park planning, design and operations.
- Improving the quality and quantity of public shoreline accesses and supporting non-motorized recreational opportunities in key waterfront locations.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age Distribution

- Percentage of young children (aged 0 to 4 years and 5-9 years) has been growing.
- Increasing number of adults ages 30 to 39 and 60 to 79.

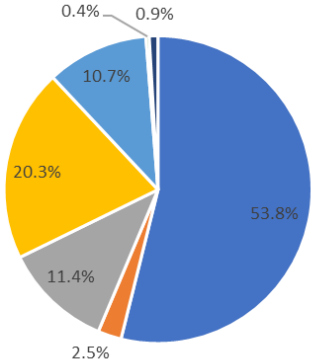


DEMOGRAPHICS

Form of Dwelling

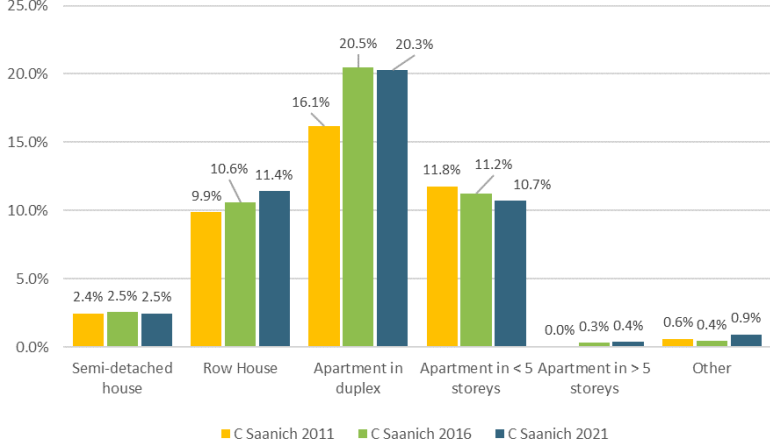
- Given the District’s future housing needs and its focus on densifying and infilling existing residential areas, it is expected that over time the number of multi-family housing units will increase.

Census Data 2021
Central Saanich Dwelling Type



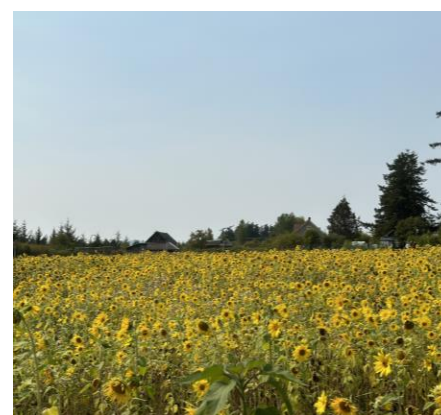
■ Single detached house
 ■ Semi-detached house
 ■ Row House
■ Apartment in duplex
 ■ Apartment in < 5 storeys
 ■ Apartment in > 5 storeys

Central Saanich Census Data - 2011, 2016 & 2021
Multi-Family Forms of Dwelling



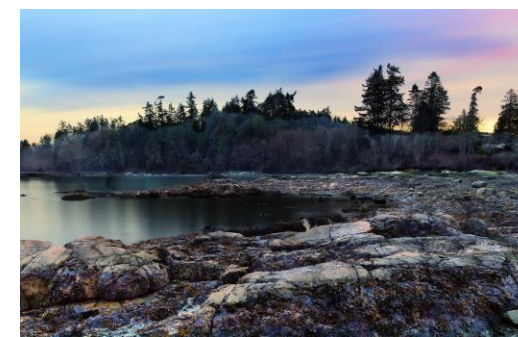
PARK INVENTORY

PRIMARY PARK CLASSIFICATION	COUNT	AREA (ha)
Community Park	2	19.89
Neighbourhood Park	21	11.28
Nature Park	15	43.63
Heritage Farm	1	1.81
Shoreline Access (Developed)	7	1.14
Pathways and Trail Linkages	9	4.90
Undeveloped	5	14.80
Shoreline Access (Undeveloped)	9	2.32
SUBTOTAL – DCS LANDS	69	99.77
Nature Park – Other (Developed)	3	119.43
Nature Park – Other (Undeveloped)	1	18.49
School Grounds	5	8.48
Other Open Space	2	2.25
TOTAL	79	248.42



PARKLAND SUPPLY ANALYSIS

- Population Based
- Area Based
- Spatial Distribution

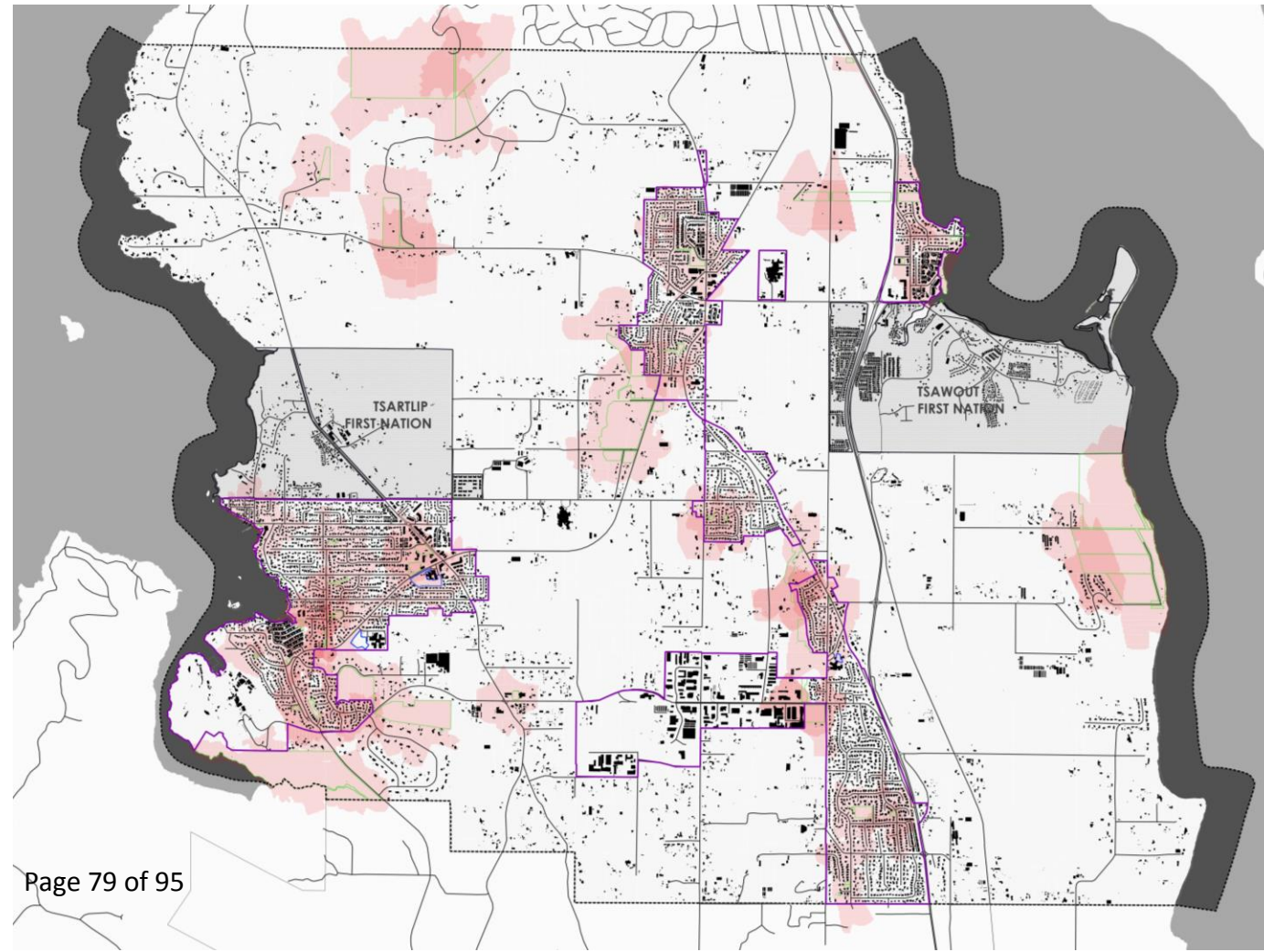




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SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

- Eg - 5 minute walk – all parks

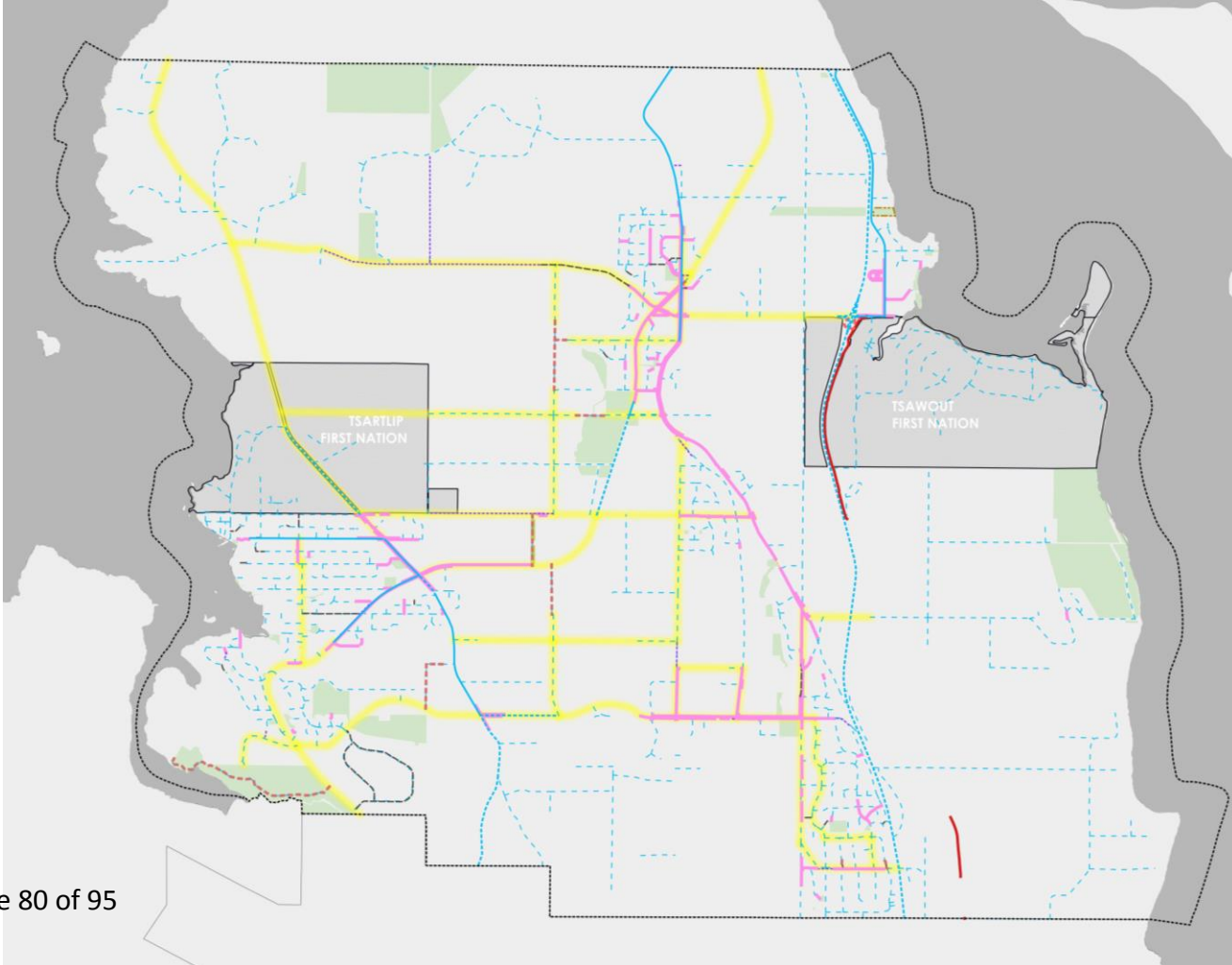




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NETWORK ANALYSIS

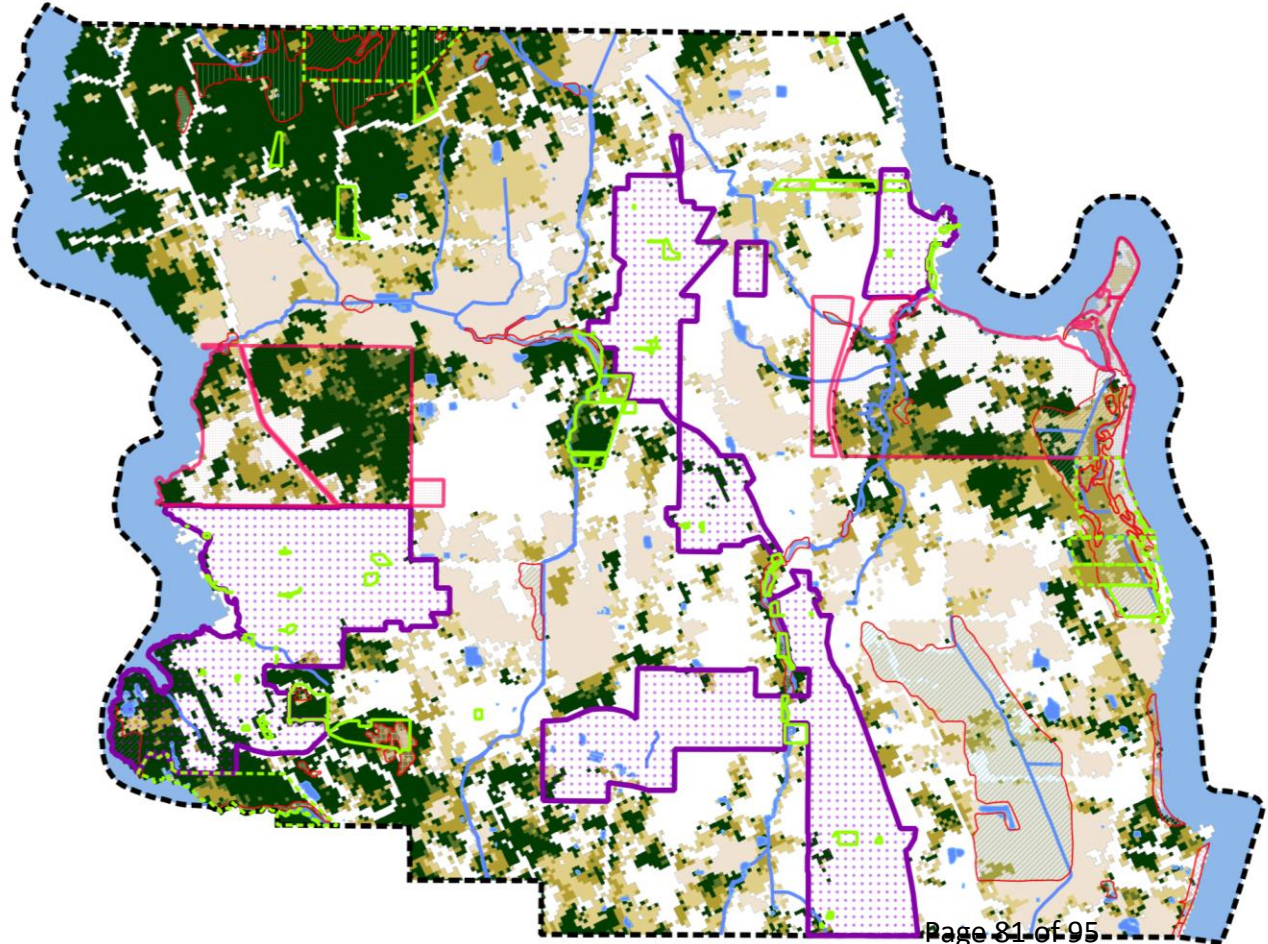
- Accessibility
- Connectivity
- Consistency across municipal boundaries
- Relationship with 2021 Active Transportation Plan





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ECOLOGICAL VALUES



Sensitive Ecosystems

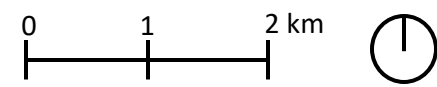
- Coastal Bluffs
- Woodland
- Terrestrial Herbaceous
- Older Forest
- Riparian
- Sparsely Vegetated
- Wetland
- Seasonally Flooded Agricultural
- Older Second Growth
- Garry Oak 1997

Land Cover (2020)

- Temperate Needleleaf
- Mixed Forest
- Temperate Shrubland
- Temperate Grassland
- Wetland
- Crop Land
- Water

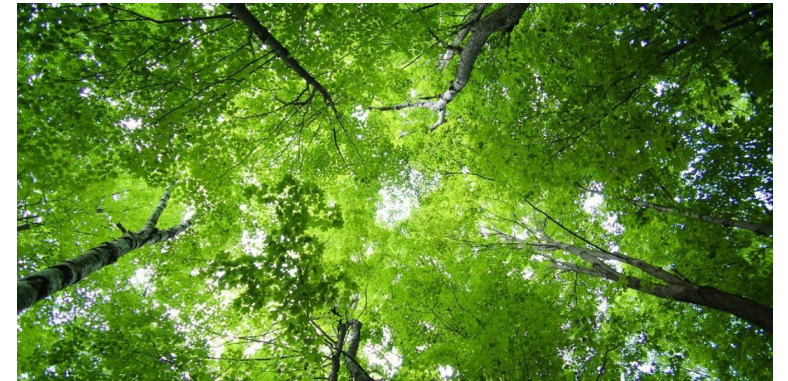
Other

- Rivers & Creeks
- Ponds



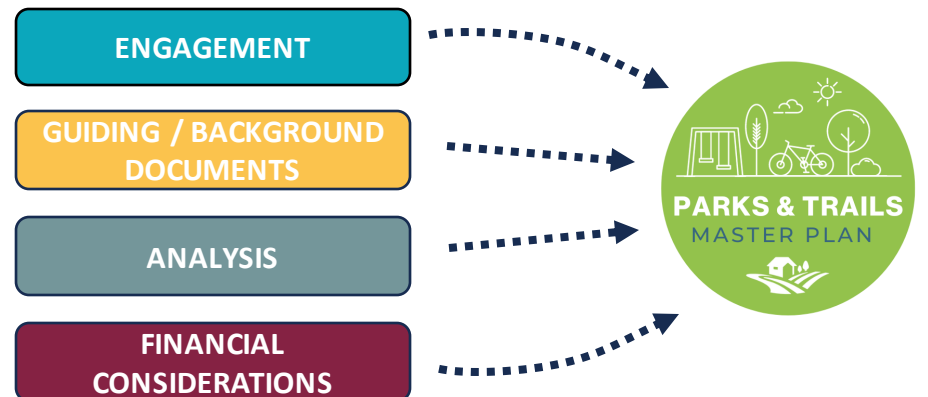
CLIMATE CHANGE & RESILIENCY

- Wetter conditions in winter with longer droughts in summer, coupled with an increase in unpredictable storm events
 - Impacts on operations and maintenance
 - Impacts on plant species selections
 - Impacts on park use patterns
- Opportunities for green infrastructure and nature-based solutions



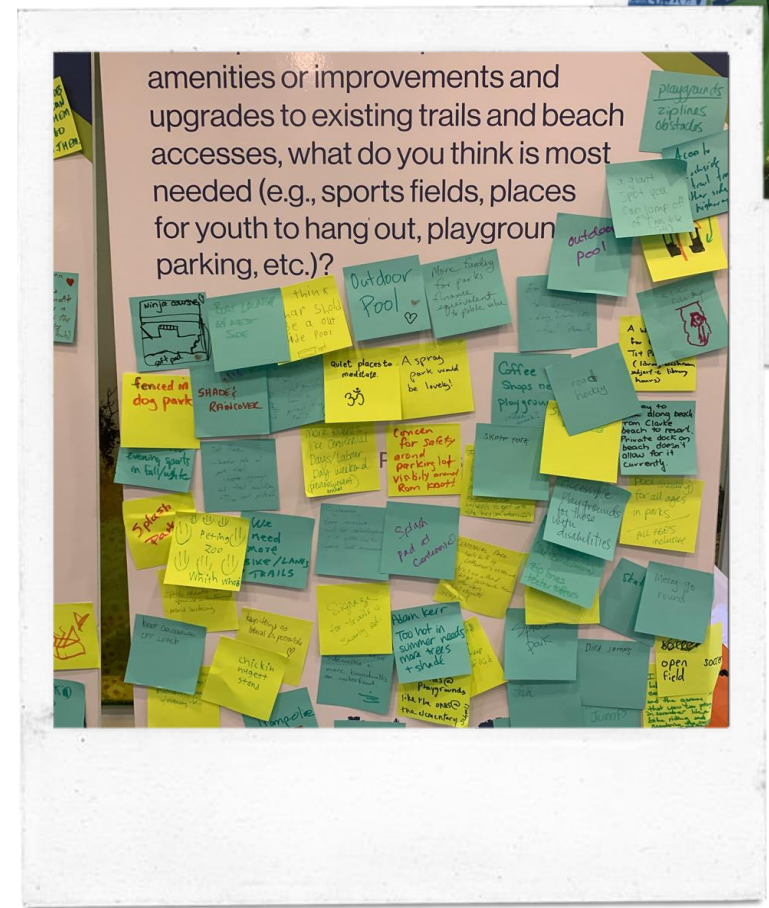
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Plan must be realistic and achievable - financially, operationally
 - Consider operational and capital budgets
 - Strategic partnerships
 - Prioritized implementation strategy



Community Engagement

1. Outreach and efforts
2. Who we heard from
3. What we heard



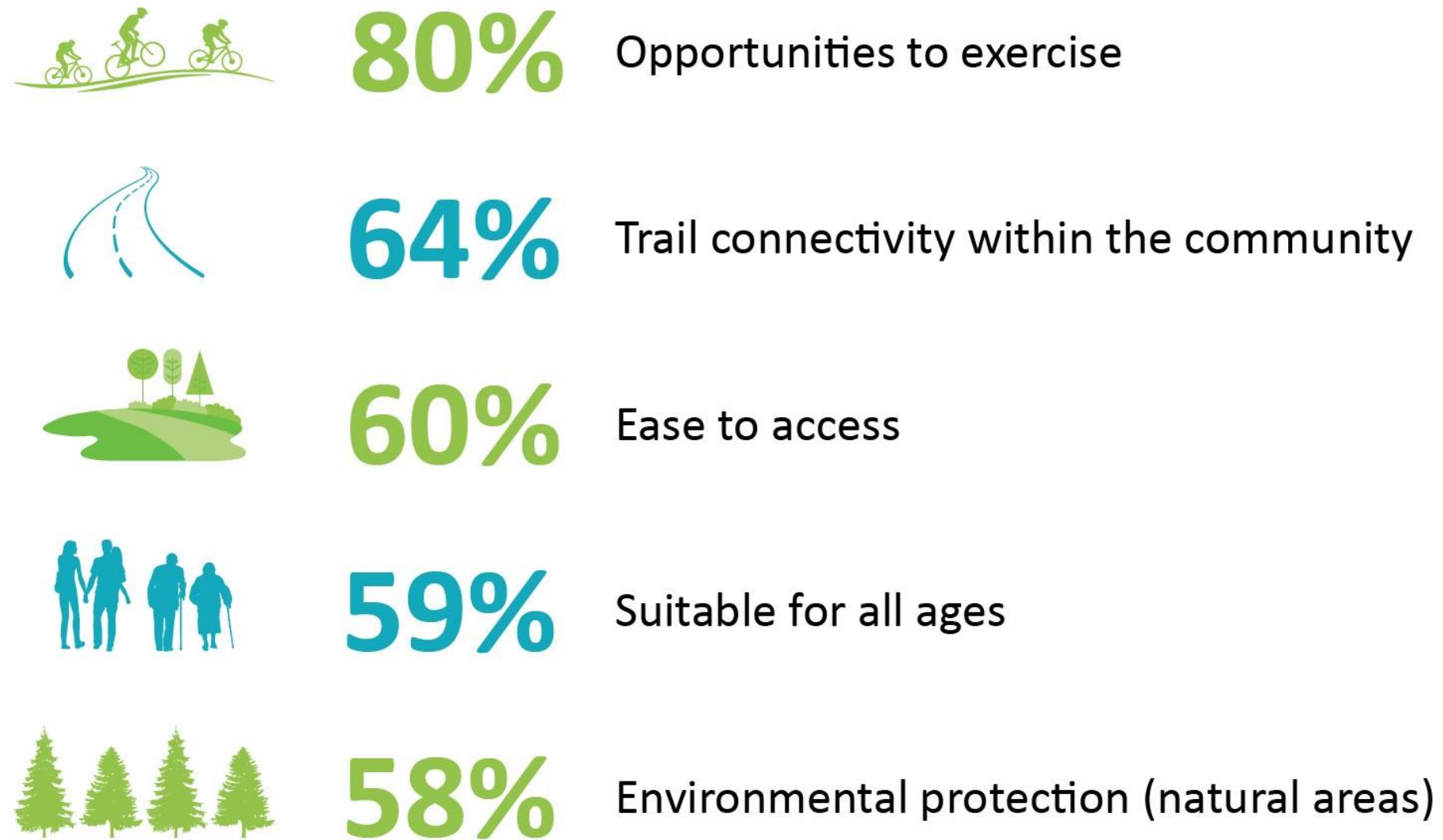
Phase 1 Engagement Opportunities

- Pop-up Events - 148 participants
- Community Open - 60 participants
- Survey - 267 participants
- Workshops
 - School Workshops
 - Environmental Groups
 - Community Partners
 - Dog and Equestrian User Groups
 - Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Facility Bookings/Rec Organization User Groups Survey and Open House
- Staff Focus Groups
- Partner Meetings with local municipalities, Panorama Recreation Commission, organizations serving vulnerable populations

600+
Participants
1,000+
visited project site

What We Heard

What we value about parks, trails and shorelines



What We Heard

How people use our parks, trails and shorelines

Regular use (30-50% of survey respondents using 1+/week) for parks and trails

Uses quite consistent whether park, trails or shoreline:

- Walking, walking dog, exercising
- Relaxing and hanging out with friends and family



What We Heard

What improvements people would like to see

Improvements align with the priorities

1. Restoration and habitat enhancements
2. washrooms
3. off-leash fenced dog areas
4. rest areas/benches
5. accessibility

Age groups that were identified as needing the most focus:

- **11-20 year olds**
 - Younger youth = natural play areas such as climbing courses, tree houses, ziplines, and, of course... water parks!
 - Teenagers = beach and water access, volunteer opportunities, wildlife viewing, and places to hang out with food trucks and basic facilities such as washrooms, water fountains and sheltered areas.
- **65+** washrooms, rest areas, covered areas and increased seating would better serve older adults.

Priorities of public to date



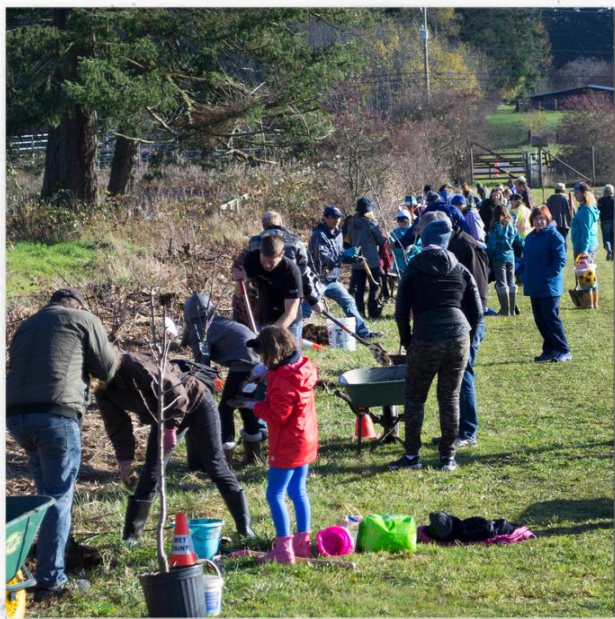
Accessibility for all ages



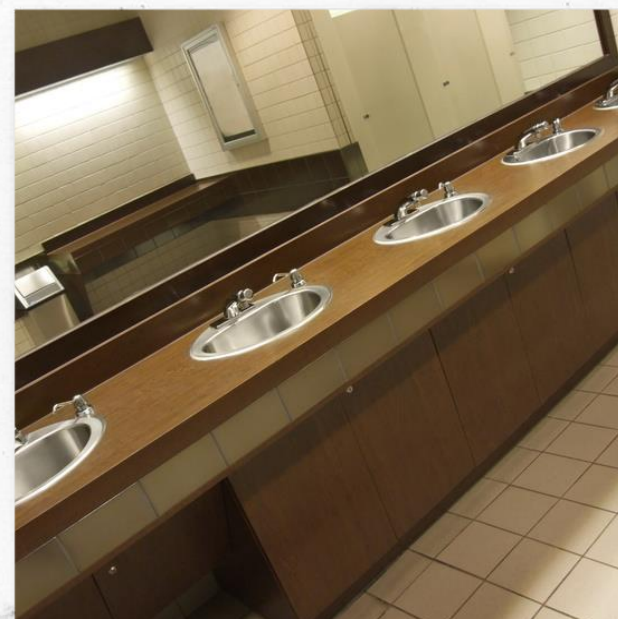
Connectivity and access



Responsible dog ownership & dog-friendly designs



Environmental management



More amenities



Focus on safety



Signage, signage, signage!

Priorities of public to date



Improve **accessibility** of parks, trails and shorelines



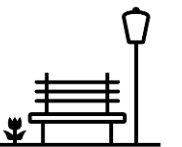
Improve **connectivity** and access to parks



Ensure **dog-friendly parks/trails** and **responsible dog ownership**



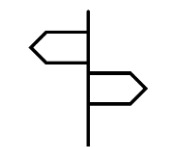
Keep parks **natural**, **restore** natural areas and expand forest canopy



Improve **infrastructure** (washrooms, parking, youth amenities, etc)

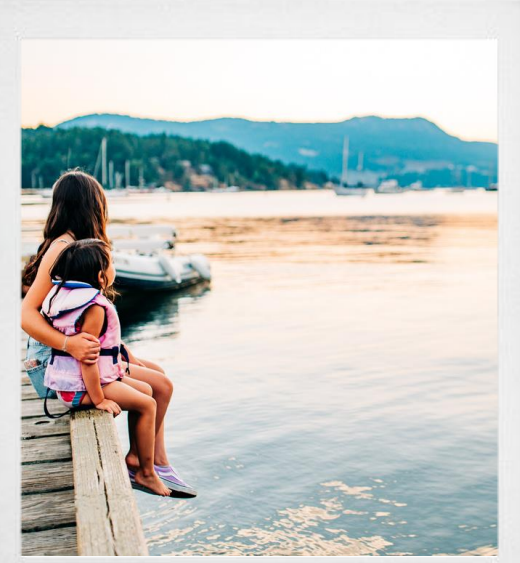


Focus on **safety** (reduce multi-user conflicts, lighting, safe access)
(#2&3 challenge identified = lighting; crowded trails)

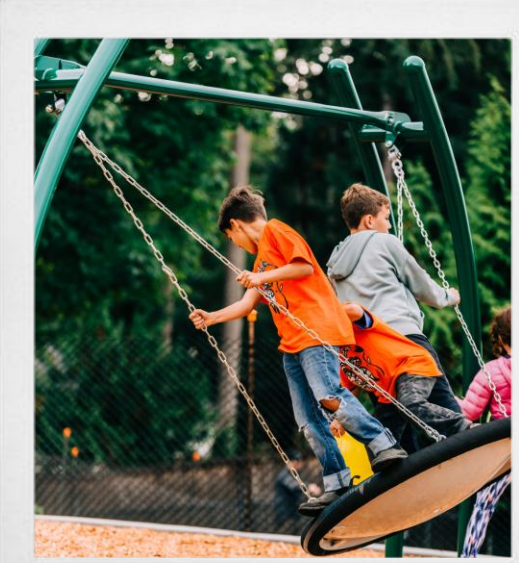


Improve **signage** and trail information (#1 challenge identified)

Youth's priorities



Beaches to explore



All-age playgrounds



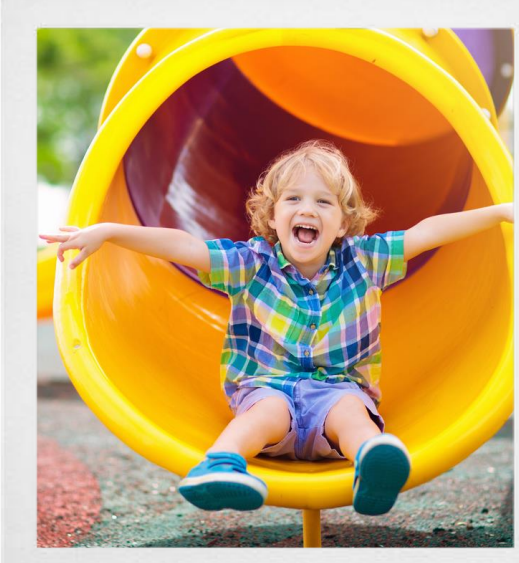
Places to ride



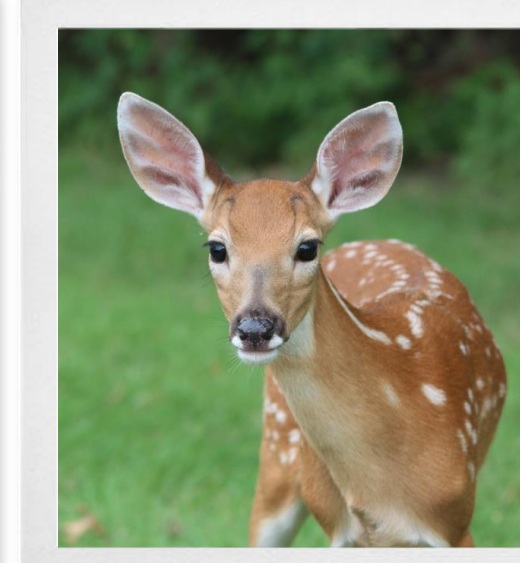
Trees to climb & ziplines



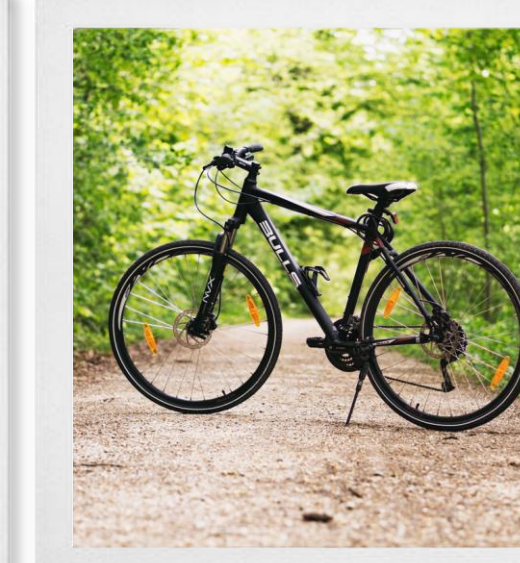
Food!



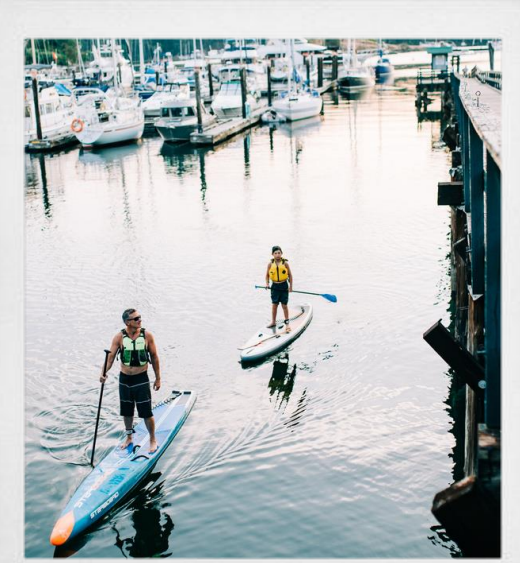
Tunnel slides



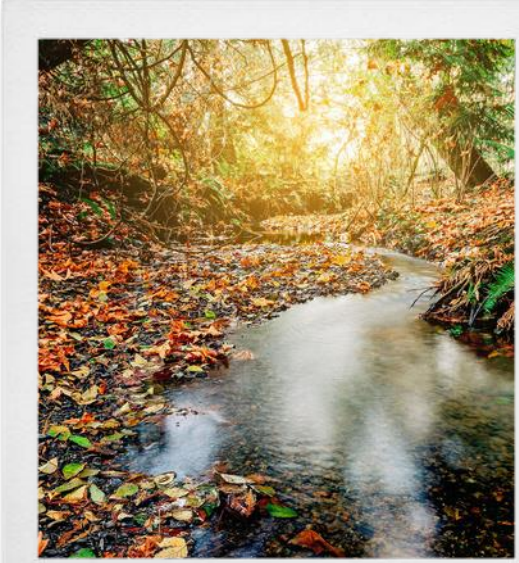
Animal viewing



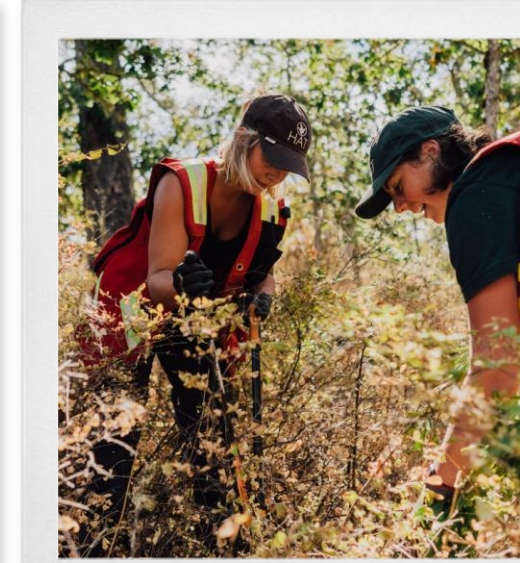
Biking



Places to paddle



Protecting nature



Opportunities to volunteer



Places for teens to hang out

Environmental priorities



Protect native species



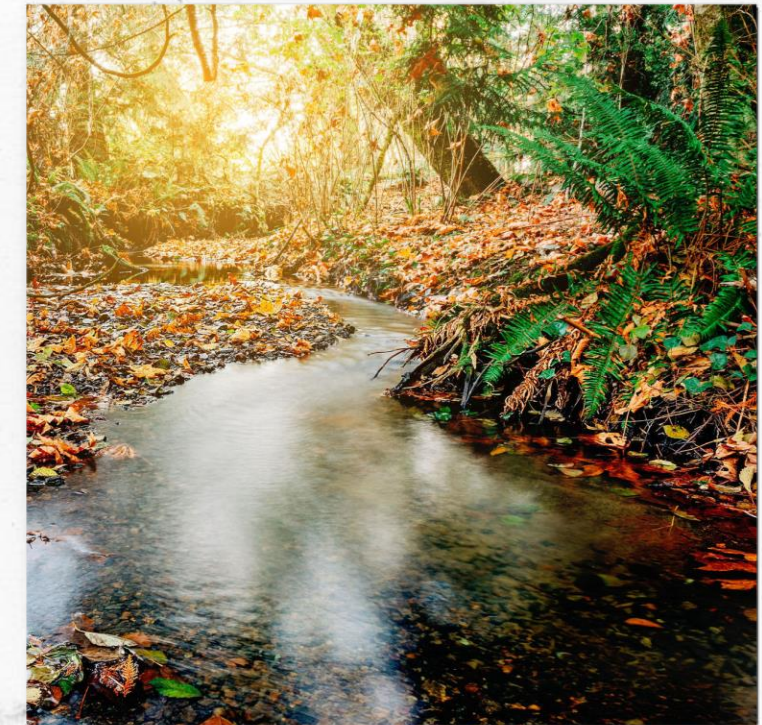
**Incorporate climate
resilience into design**



**Incorporate green
space**



Manage invasive species



**Protect sensitive
ecosystems**

Recent (OCP) input from First Nations

- Enable access to parkland through a formal agreement for **traditional harvesting and gathering** of plants, which may include temporary closures to respect culturally sensitive events.
- Collaborate with WSÁNEĆ Nations to **identify, protect and restore ecologically and culturally sensitive areas** within the District, including within the Parks and Trails system.
- Explore the creation of First Nations **traditional and medicinal gardens** in municipal parks in collaboration with WSÁNEĆ Nations, and include **interpretative signs** to educate the public on these important features.

Looking forward to upcoming input from S̓ÁUTW̓ (Tsawout) and W̓JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip) staff and Councils

Next Steps

April

- Publish what we have heard to date

Spring/Summer

- Develop a Draft Plan
- Repeat engagement on the Draft Plan

Late 2024

- Finalize Draft Plan

2025 and beyond

- Fund Master Plan implementation and work with partners on actions over the coming years



Discussion questions

1. Does the public feedback resonate with you? Is there anything you hear/feel is not represented that needs to be considered?
2. What are your priorities for the P&TMP?
3. Do you have specific priorities for land acquisition for park and trail development?
4. Other comments?